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DIVISION OF  
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

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To the Field  
In U. S. A.

Yes No

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,  
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to transmit herewith as of possible interest to the Department a copy of a report on Italian Somalia which has been obtained from confidential sources by the Commercial Attaché of the Embassy and which has been prepared by an expert investigator on behalf of an American corporation.

Respectfully yours,

For the Ambassador:

Alexander Kirk.  
Alexander Kirk,  
Counselor of Embassy.

Enclosure:

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ITALIAN SOMALILAND.

November, 1928.

PART I.

Geography: Italian Somaliland extends from Bandar Ziyada, a point on the Gulf of Aden, intersected by  $49^{\circ}\text{E.}$ , to Cape Guardafui and thence to a point 130 miles southwest of the Juba river at  $42^{\circ}\text{E.} - 1^{\circ}\text{S.}$

It is bounded on the N. by the Gulf of Aden., S. by Kenya Colony, E. by the Indian Ocean and W. by Kenya Colony, Abyssinia and British Somaliland.

Area 139,430 sq. miles, now given as 447,000 sq. k. since the annexation of the North.

Topography: The coast line, of 1300 miles, is practically unbroken. There is no inlet in bay of any extent except at Ras Hafun, where a bold headland partly encloses a sandy bay, or rather lagoon, for the water is only four feet deep.

The northern part of the country is mountainous, barren hills of limestone rising sheer up from the sea with mountains immediately behind.

Further South there is a strip of sand desert between the sea and the mountains which gradually widens until at Ras Aswad the hills are 150 miles back from the coast.

Three or four sand ridges, about 300' high, run parallel with the coast, the first of these rising from the shore; in some places, these are bare sand, in others there is a scanty growth of low thorn bush and cactus. The ridges, with their valleys, extend inland a distance of fifteen miles, after which the land falls 150' to a plain which rises very gradually to 500', here there is a plateau which joins up with the hill and mountain country to the West.

There are only two rivers which are perennial, the Webi Shibeli and the Webi Gamama, or Juba; both rise in the mountains of Abyssinia, the Juba being 1800 miles in length.

The statement that the Wadi Nogal flows continuously is not correct, this river, like every other river and stream in Somaliland, other than the two mentioned above, only contains water during the rains and for a few weeks subsequent.

Neither



Neither the Webbe Shibeli nor the Juba overflow their banks except in the case of very low places along the banks which are converted into swamps during the rains in the Abyssinian mountains which cause these rivers to rise.

Local rains have little effect on these two rivers.

Geology:

The Italian territory contains very little mountain country, there is no mining and I could not hear of any minerals having been discovered.

Coral rock underlies the sand ridges which parallel the coast, inland there is no rock or stone to be seen until after the 500' mark is reached where, in some parts, the soil contains gravel and coarse sand and there are "Burs", (isolated hills of bare ironstone) dotted about, these are two to three miles apart, and rise up sheer from the plain to an elevation of from 200-500 feet, the bases covering an area of forty to sixty acres.

In the north, the mountains are of limestone near the coast and ironstone further inland.

Vegetation:

Along the bank of the Webbe Shibeli there are a few "yak" trees of considerable girth but little height. The growth is similar to the English oak and there is evidence that there was at one time a fringe of woodland extending as far as the seepage of the river carried, this, however, has all disappeared due to the fact that there have been villages along the banks for many years.

Apart from this and the lands in the immediate vicinity of the Juba I did not see a single indigenous tree over thirty feet in height.

Grey colored thorn bushes, cactus, aloes, acacia and camel thorn, with an occasional flat topped juniper with some weeds and a scanty growth of grass, all of it burnt a dirty grey brown about comprises the vegetation of Somaliland in every part I visited.

When the rains come the grass is green for a few weeks but most of the year the desert bred cattle, sheep, camels and goats live on the dry grass and browse on the twigs of the thorn bushes.

Meteorology

## Meteorology:

Seasons: The natives divide the year into four seasons:-

Gilal: The middle of December to the middle of March.  
Weather very hot and dry. N.E. Monsoon.

Gu: Middle of March to end of May. Hot with rains.  
About May monsoon changes to S.W.

Hagai: First of June to end of September, cool weather  
with the light rains, S.W. monsoon heavy.

Der: October 1st to December 15th. Weather hot, light  
rains in October and early November.

Winds: The Indian S.W. monsoon blows for practically ten  
months a year. This, of course, greatly assists in  
drying up water holes and vegetation.

During July, August and September, it blows with  
great violence in the northern part of the colony, as  
I saw when at Hafum. Sand in great clouds together  
with small stones are driven by the wind in all  
directions, caravans can make no headway against it  
and no vegetation other than the thorn bushes could  
survive.

As one goes South the force of the Monsoon  
gradually decreases until at Mombasa it is a light  
breeze and it dies out entirely at Zanzibar.

During my visit to Somaliland it blew steadily  
night and day much like the Trades of the Carribean.

All the bananas I saw except those in sheltered  
localities were badly ribboned.

I saw very few blow-downs, a few trees along a  
roadside on the Duke's plantation were down but this  
was a very exposed position.

The Director of this farm told me that the highest  
velocity they had recorded was 37.5 K.P.H. Their wind  
gauge is, however, in a most extraordinary place - on a  
post three feet high on the N.E. side of a bungalow  
distant about 100 feet. I have not discovered any  
Government record which shows a higher velocity than  
that stated above. I was told that about once in  
thirty years there is a typhoon on the coast, but was  
unable to verify this.

Temperature



Temperature: During the cool season of July, August and September the mean temperature is by day 82°, night 65. During the hot season the day temperature is 102°, night 80°, these are temperatures for Joar where the Duke of Abruzzi's plantation is located and are approximately the same as those recorded at Gemale where is situated the second irrigated area.

Temperatures, of course, vary in accordance with the distance one is from the coast and consequent decrease in the force of the monsoon. At Afmadu, S. of the Juba, for instance, I recorded a temperature of 98° at 2 p.m.

The temperature never falls sufficiently low to chill bananas.

Rainfall: This year both the "big and little" rains (May and June "big", October "little") have completely failed throughout Southern Somaliland, and the greater part of Kenya; there are prospects of a famine and the boat by which I came to Mombasa was returning from taking a cargo of maize to Mogadishu. I believe the Kenya Government is stopping the exportation of all corn crops.

Rainfall:

Joar (Villaggio Duca Degli Abbruzzi).

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total in M/M.
1926	-	-	-	-	57	-	78	5	10	76	86	5.5	317.5
1927	-	-	-	-	100	114.5	100	7	91	111.5	69	21.5	614.5
Days Rain													
1927	-	-	-	-	14	18	12	4	5	11	7	5	76 days.

Rainfall 1922 - 258M/M. in 1923 1093 M/M.

Very variable, seven years average 400 M/M.

Rise and Fall of Webbe Shibeli at Mahaddei.  
(Town 30 K. up river from Joar.)

	1st. of month	end of month	
Dec. 1927	1.10	1.30	Metres.
Jan. 1928	1.28	0.64	"
Feb. "	0.64	0.40	"
Mar. "	0.40	-	"
Apr. "	-	-	"
May "	0.50	4.80	"
June "	4.70	1.95	"
July "	1.90	2.58	"

Jelib on the Juba, 1925 794" rain, 1926 965.5, and 1927 831 M/Ms.

From the figures quoted it will be noted that the rainfall is less than twenty inches per annum and, as this year, it frequently happens that the river falls so low that there is insufficient water to irrigate, this is not of much consequence with seasonal crops such as maize, sim-sim and cotton as these crops are grown and harvested between May and November but it would be fatal to bananas.

It has not been possible to observe the effects of the drought on bananas except in a few very small cultivations, 80% of the bananas now growing have been planted since the drought last winter, the balance growing in most cases in the vicinity of houses and gardens received such water as was to be had and are no criterion of what would happen to a fair sized plantation when no water was available during the months of intense heat.

## PART II.

Population: There are above 1800 Europeans in the Colony. I could only hear of three who were not Italians, apart from a few missionaries.

The native population is estimated to be 650,000.

Native Races: The Somali claim to be descended from the Arabs who fled after the death of Mahommed and the ensuing tribal wars thirteen hundred years ago. They have Arab features and are fairly strict Mussulmans of the Shafai sect, only a few of them are settled in villages, the great majority are nomadic and wander with their flocks and herds over hundreds of miles of country, making short halts where they find water and pasture; now some of the tribes are commencing to settle in villages but still do no work other than tending their camels and cattle.

There are few permanent villages in the interior except those founded and occupied by mullahs and these average seventy miles apart.

The Somalis have not altered much in many years and have not the slightest interest or use for European civilization, they live on camels' milk and meal with millet prepared in different ways.

Their



Their clothes consist of a single piece of cotton cloth about eight yards long wound round the waist with the ends thrown over the shoulder; they wear no head covering, a spear and a broad bladed knife is carried and a wooden pillow when they are on trek.

Women do all the work except the loading of the camels and looking after the cattle.

They carry on the camels a number of bent poles which form the framework of the huts which they cover with hides and skins, the tents are surrounded by a double fence (zeriba) of thorn bush. The height and width of this depending on the number of lions and leopards in the district, inside the fences they construct pens for the sheep, goats, camels and donkeys at night; usually fires are kept burning as well.

The Somalis are a warlike race and prior to the advent of the white man were gradually pushing southward and westward and driving the Galla and other tribes before them towards the great Lakes. The Somalis, however, being a mountain people, precisely as with the Central American Indians, are afraid of the unhealthy lowlands and so, for many years, the vicinity of the great rivers had been a refuge for the negro tribes whom the Somali had defeated, thus it came about that a distinct race, known as the Webi Shibeli negroes, was evolved, but eventually the Somalis pushed eastwards and when the Italians first took over the country these negroes were the slaves of the Somali.

There is no social system in Somaliland but government by tribes, clans and families; there is no cohesion and no paramount native chief.

On the Juba river the Gosha tribe lives, a purely negro race, of better physique than the Somali but not nearly as intelligent.

There are, in addition, various lesser tribes in Jubaland with a sprinkling of Masai, etc.

The population of the coast towns consists of samples of half the races of Africa and the East. Arabs predominate but there are many British Indians, etc. etc.

These people live principally on fish and rice with maize boiled and prepared in various manners, throughout Somaliland meat is the principal article of diet.

#### Administration

Adminis-  
tration:

Various heads of tribes or families have been given a limited amount of authority, acting under the instructions of their local Residents.

Labour:

There is a great shortage of labour for agricultural work, a very small percentage of the population will do anything except look after their stock and the question of indentured Chinese labour is under consideration.

The labour supply is very much better on the Shebeli than in the vicinity of the Juba, but in the case of the former except on the Duke's farm, the area planted in cotton is restricted owing to the difficulty of getting the crop picked.

Ex-slaves under Somali foremen do good work but much of the labour is gathered in by soldiers with loaded rifles, they go out to the villages or wherever they can find men, herd them in and put them to work for three months, each farm has a small squad of soldiers for the purpose of gathering and guarding labour.

Unless, of course, the man happens to be one of those Somalis who in recent years have settled down in a village, this task of civilisation suffices and at the first opportunity he leaves for the interior and is not caught again.

Many schemes have been tried to create a demand for goods amongst the natives which would necessitate their working to obtain the purchase price; so far, however, no one has discovered anything the Somali wants which the European can supply. They even went to the extent of trying to get them to drink wine, but however lax he may be in the observances of his creed, it is, in this instance, quite impossible to get a Mussulman to transgress.

The various missions operating in the country are making no headway in either civilizing the people or getting them to accept their various brands of religion, and the waifs and strays they pick up and educate promptly revert to their native religion and mode of life as soon as they are big enough to run away.

The Duke of Abbruzzi has a colonization scheme working with very fair success, but this is almost entirely negro labour.

Wages are higher than is usual in East Africa, the daily wages paid are men: 4 lira; women: 3; and boys 2 lira (approximately 11d., 8d. and 5d.). Work is usually given out by the task, which task takes about ten hours to perform.

Housing.



Housing:

Water governs the location of villages and they are invariably found near wells.

The villages are surrounded by an irregular wall some eight or ten feet high constructed of interlaced sticks plastered with mud, the houses, built in a similar manner, are circular, about ten feet in diameter and roofed with grass or reeds. Cooking is done in the hut which has no window and only a very small door opening into an enclosed yard, with a high fence where sheep and goats are kept.

In the larger villages there is no communal fence but each little group of three or four huts has its own. There are no large council huts and the huts of the chiefs differ but little from the rest, a few I noticed were square and somewhat larger. Some villages have a small mosque.

The coastal towns also date back thirteen hundred years to the time of the disturbances in Arabia, following the death of the prophet, but there is evidence that they were settled long before that time. They consist of a small walled Arab town in the vicinity of which has sprang up a number of native huts. The town consists of flat topped stone built houses separated by a maze of narrow passages and courtyards. The walls are very thick and the doors, studded with bronze spikes and beautifully carved, immensely strong.

Corners of these towns have been taken over by the Government and forms the European quarter.

The population is approximately: Mogadishu 16,000, Merka 8,000, Brava 6,000, Kismayu 7,000. The first-named contains a few Government buildings and private houses of modern construction.

Food &  
Cost of  
Living:

The nomadic Somali lives entirely on milk and meat, the Webbi negroes on meat, river fish, and baked or boiled corn or millet. Those living on the coast eat rice and fish principally.

They do not cultivate yams and cassava although they sometimes have a patch of plantains which they irrigate with what I believe is the customary arrangement of the East of a skin bucket on the end of a long pole balanced on a forked stick, stones are tied on the other end of the pole as a counter-balance to the water which is delivered into a trough of wood on the river bank.

Living is cheap for the native even when he has to buy all his food; meat costs him only about 1d. per lb., eggs can be bought 20 for 3d.

I enclose a recent price list from the largest trading  
firm

firm in Mogadishu.

Living, for the Italians, is, although somewhat higher than in Italy, distinctly cheap. In Mogadishu beef is L.1. per lb., mutton the same, fish less, vegetables are rather scarce and dear but imported foodstuffs are reasonable. House rent is high, £2 per week for a single large room is no uncommon price; this is due to there being no timber in the country and the high freight rates on building materials, also much cargo is damaged and lost in the surf boats so that what arrives carries the loss on the damaged goods. (Just why they import cement in bags instead of drums I cannot say).

Building on the coast is done with blocks of coral rock sawn out like Bath stone.

### PART III.

#### Government:

#### Administration:

When Conte de Vecchi de Val Cismon took over the Governorship of the colony, just over four years ago, he inaugurated a Fascist regime; he was relieved by Count de Corni in July who is carrying on the same form of government. It is, to a large extent, martial law. There is no council and no representing of the colonists, the Governor gives his orders and the army sees they are carried out.

The Governor is responsible only to Mussolini who submits for the Governor's approval the names of all who wish to go to the colony from Italy whether in the Government service or as private individuals.

The country is divided into seven administrative districts, each under a commissioner; in addition there are forty-seven residents who are the heads of the civil administration in their sub-districts.

Practically all the Administrators and Residents are army officers and the country is linked up with good roads and a large number of radio stations, while at many strategic points they have a force of native troops under Italian officers and N.C.Os., equipped with armoured cars and machine guns.

At Mogadishu they have twelve planes and there are a number of small landing fields scattered about the country, at the capital is kept a number of motor trucks for the quick transportation of troops.

There is a system of interior passports for the natives who have to obtain a visa to travel from one district to the other, and any native out after dark is compelled to carry a lantern. These regulations do not apply to Arabs or Indians.

On the whole the treatment of the natives appears to be fair, as long as they behave, but the Italians are utterly ruthless in case of disturbance or uprising, any native has the right to a personal interview with the Governor and complaints, such as non-payment of wages, are promptly investigated.

Conte



Conte de Corni is not the same type of man as de Vecchi. This latter person was nothing before the revolution, although he had a good war record. He was one of the first of the Fascisti and became Mussolini's right hand man, particularly distinguishing himself by his bloodthirsty methods. He is reported to have killed more than 200 people with his own hand. This is probably an exaggeration, but evidently, from all accounts, he is extremely "hardboiled", and put the fear of God into the hearts of the Somali.

Ten million lira is the nest egg he is stated to have accumulated during his office as Governor in Somaliland.

Mussolini likes to have him some distance away, but he has refused the job of Ambassador in Buenos Aires and is now director of a big bank in Turin.

Conte de Corni is a man of very good family, and wealthy. He left a few days ago to return to Italy for a conference with Mussolini and the general opinion is that he does not want the job, and if he can get out of it will not return.

Laws & Con-  
cessions:

The laws and their administration are in accordance with the Fascist regime in Italy, modified to meet local conditions with respect to the natives.

Concessions would not be granted except to Italian subjects. On the Juba there is a Greek with a small farm of 100 acres, he has been in the country for ten years, a few weeks ago he applied to the Government for an additional 100 acres and was told he could not have it unless he became an Italian citizen.

All land is the property of the Government and no freehold is granted, the planters hold their land on a 99 years lease at an annual rental of fifty lira per hectare (about 4/5 $\frac{1}{2}$  per acre).

Policies:

Somaliland has been acquired by the Italians since 1889, in 1892 we ceded Brava and other ports E. of the Juba and in 1925 a strip of territory including Kismaya to the South and West of that river.

Until the governorship of De Vecchi the Italian colony consisted of only the southern part of the country, the north being a protectorate governed by the native sultans. The latter are now either dead or in jail, and the whole country under Italian military rule.

This annexation resulted in the addition of 200,000 sq. kilometers to Italian Somaliland, the whole move was purely strategic as there is no timber, minerals or agricultural land in the whole area. However, Italy wants Abyssinia, hence this move.

Revenue &  
Expenditure:

Revenue is derived from customs and hut and poll taxes on  
the

the natives. Expenditure in 1927 is stated to be Lira 55,015,250. Revenue about L. 22,000,000. I am not certain of these figures, however. There are many grants and subsidies from the home Government and figures are much involved.

Hospital Sanitation and Vital Statistics:

There is a good and well equipped military hospital at Mogadishu with Italian doctors and nurses, private patients are accepted at an inclusive charge of Lire 40 per day.

The Government maintains small hospitals or dispensaries in all the larger towns and military posts.

Vaccination is compulsory and sanitation receives close attention, as a rule the towns and villages are very clean.

Generally speaking, I should say the country was quite healthy, there is no sleeping sickness anywhere and little or no malaria on the coast, only in the vicinity of the rivers is it bad and then principally in the irrigated districts.

The days are hot but the nights almost always cool and I found it necessary to wear a thick sweater and a raincoat while motoring at night, this right on the equator.

Statistics are not available to show the death-rate and whether the population is increasing; infantile mortality is very high, as everywhere in the tropics.

Mogadishu

July-December, 1927

Births: 188

Deaths (under  
age of one  
year) 121

There have been some epidemics of plague in past years and due to defective nutrition, the Somali falls an easy victim to Malaria, Dengue, Influenza, etc.

PART IV.

Commercial:

Business:

The principal exports are: cotton, hides, skins, vegetable oils, gum, ivory and ostrich feathers.

Value in Lire

	( 1923	65,193,728	
<u>Exports:</u>	(1926	158,475,218	
	( 1927	181,000,000	(Approximate, but was expected to exceed this).



The bulk of the trading is done by Arabs and Indians with some few Italians in Mogadishu, transportation by cars and lorries is in the hands of the Arabs.

The only bank of the colony is the Banca d'Italia, at Mogadishu, with a branch at Kismayu.

The most important trading firm is the Compagnia Italiana dell'Est Africa.

The caravans from the interior transact most of their business with the Arabs and Indians and it would appear to be a difficult business for the European to get into and make anything out of it. The caravans from the interior bring gum-arabic, ivory and ostrich feathers.

Mining and  
Timber:

So far, no minerals have been found and there is no timber in the country which could be exploited commercially.

Wireless cables.  
Telephones:

At Afgoi 30 kilometres W. of Mogadishu there is a beam radio station in communication with Rome, this communicates with some ten smaller stations, through the country.

There is telegraphic communication along the railway from Mogadishu to Joar, and in connection with some of the principal towns and telephonic communication in Mogadishu.

There is no cable.

Railways:

A Government railway runs from Mogadishu to Joar, a distance of 124 kilometres, this is now being extended to the Abyssinian frontier. There is little business done as the line was built primarily for strategic reasons and secondarily to serve the Duke of Abruzzi's plantation, at present they run one train per week and the first-class fare is 75 lira for the 124 kilometres or two and one half times what the Arab lorries charge.

The gauge is one metre with 40 lb. rails and steel ties, the rolling stock consists of some 40 box cars with a few flat cars, etc., three Porter engines of about 20 tons and two of Italian make and somewhat heavier, the right-of-way is ballasted with coral rock.

They plan to complete the extension to the Abyssinian border within two years, and are working on it now.

A 60 c/m. Decanville track was commenced some time ago from Merka to run to Gemale, and serve the cotton plantations in the district. This has apparently been abandoned and there is talk of running a branch line from Afgoi to Gemale, a distance of about 70 kilometres. This could be done very cheaply. The land is level. The whole way would require no bridges, no cuts and no fills, and only the slightest grade would be needed, say 10". This will no doubt be done within the next two years.

There

Roads:

There are five thousand kilometres of earth roads in the colony, which are quite good, but in time of rain they, however, become impassable for either cars or camels.

From Mogadishu to Afgoi and from Merka to Gemale, across the ridges of loose sand, they have constructed rock roads, coral rock, all that is available is used, and it is without doubt the poorest road material known, in a matter of weeks it crumbles to powder and works into the loose sand beneath, leaving a surface which is a nightmare to drive over.

Shipping  
Harbors,  
etc.

Tonnage entered

1923.	19,482 tons
1927.	50,000 "

The monthly mail service from Italy of the Compagnia Italiana Transatlantica is the only regular service with Europe direct. The Italian Compagnia Triestina maintains a service once monthly from Italy via Red Sea Ports to Mogadishu, the ships returning via the Cape and West Coast.

There is a coastal service run by the Compagnia Transatlantica twice a month from Zanzibar to Massawa in Eritrea and calling at all Somaliland ports.

A 500 ton steamer, operated by the Cowassee Dimshaw Co., a Parsee firm of Aden, makes an occasional trip on the coast, also a small ship of the British India (P. & O.) line. These services are dependent on cargo offerings.

There is no harbour between Aden and Mombasa and the heavy S.W. monsoon, the strong and constantly shifting currents and poor coast lights renders navigation distinctly dangerous.

All cargo is handled by surf boats, stevedoring is expensive and it is safe to say that no ship ever discharges during a heavy wind without some accident to the cargo, it being either soaked with water or lost overboard.

The "Africa Pilot" speaking of Mogadishu states that "landing can only be effected about once in four days during the S.W. monsoon". This is quite correct and quite frequently the ships lie off the reef for six days and cannot discharge.

On the ship by which I came there arrived an engineer, the head of a dock construction company, to prepare estimates for harbour works at Mogadishu. The Italian government has granted the sum of Lire 1,200,000 for this work. I was told that after he had made a preliminary survey he said he did not think he would touch it for he doubted whether it was feasible at all, and certainly could not be done for

the



the sum allocated.

The master of a ship who knows the place well told me he felt certain it was impossible.

There is a small headland of rock jutting out, perhaps 90 yards, and from this and running in a northerly direction there is another small headland about 40 yards long. This forms a tiny bay only partly protected from the sea and is all they have as a base to work from.

The bottom is sand to some depth and offshore a coral reef runs at a distance of about 150 yards.

It is a pretty hopeless scheme but the Italians expect to see it finished in two and a half years.

At Kismayu is a bay partly enclosed by coral reefs and here there would be a better prospect of making a harbour and dock, but in this part of the country there is, at present, nothing to justify it and it would necessitate the construction of some 400 kilometres of railway and the bridging of the Juba river in order to serve the present cultivations.

No banana business can possibly be built up until such time as they have some port at which they can load, irrespective of tide and wind.

Neap tides are 6', springs 10'.

I enclose rough sketches of the anchorages at Mogadishu and Kismayu, having been unable to purchase charts.

## PART V.

### Agriculture:

#### General:

The native crops are maize, millet and sim-sim (sesamum indicum). There is no reliable record of the production per acre but in view of the lack of rain and primitive methods it must be very low.

Following is the record of the crop production of last year, 1927:

<u>White</u>	<u>Quintals</u>
Cotton .....	12,000
Sugar .....	250,000
Maize .....	20,000
Dura (a variety of millet) .	7,500
Sesamo (Sim-sim) .....	2,800
Kapok .....	65
<u>Native</u>	
Maize .....	100,000
Sesame .....	16,000
Dura .....	850,000
Cotton .....	250

I quote

I quote the above figures from a report made by the Director of Agriculture, but I rather question the figures given for sugar which seem high considering the small area cultivated.

Native methods:

The soil for some four or five inches is reduced to a powdery mulch by the end of the dry season in late May, over this the natives work with a home-made hoe not unlike an infantryman's entrenching tool. They work bent double and it has been found impossible to introduce long handled tools even in the Italian plantations, when they have chopped over the surface and cut down the few weeds they proceed with a board on the end of a pole to rake the loose earth into ridges, eventually leaving the field in a series of squares about 8' x 6', surrounded by a ridge of earth a few inches high, the idea being to catch the rain and concentrate it where the seed is planted in this tray or depression, no ploughing is done and there is, of course, no attempt at selection of seed or rotations of crops.

European  
Cultivations.

At Afgoi, thirty kilometres by road from Mogadishu, an attempt is being made to establish a colony of Italians. These people are laborers or small farmers.

The man who owns the land receives 50% of the crops grown while the Government guarantees him against loss, the land is now being ploughed, irrigation is by a 16" centrifugal pump, ploughing is done with "Fordson" tractors, there are some twenty people on this plantation at present.

There is a small dispensary and a railway station on the place, also two native villages are close by, concrete houses are now being built.

Most of the work is done by the Italians and little labor is employed.

Somaliland is not by any means a white man's country and whether even Italian laborers can stand farm work is doubtful, at all events two have died, one of sunstroke and another of malaria and several have returned to Italy.

At Gemale, which is 125 kilometres from Mogadishu and thirty from Merka, is the largest European settlement in Somaliland. Here, some ten years ago, the Government established an experimental station and some four years ago a dam was constructed.

In this area there are now 87 Italians settled, the Government has built all the main and secondary canals and roads through the district.

The farms vary considerably in size, from 400 - 1200 acres.

Cotton is the principal crop but maize and sim-sim

(sesame)



[sesame] are also grown. The yield per acre is quite good but this, of course, depends to a large extent on the ability of the farmer; it is quite obvious that many of them have only a very limited knowledge of planting. I saw one large area flooded after the majority of the boles were open.

The planters are of all types and classes, some retired army and navy officers, others mechanics, shopkeepers and clerks. The majority are quite young, and from what I saw a rather irresponsible crowd. The President of the Cotton Growers Association is only twenty-four years old.

Only about seven of them possess sufficient capital to carry on properly and, of these, some have gins and clean the cotton for the rest.

They burn all the cotton seed, seventeen hundred tons were burnt last year, just to get it out of the way (cotton seed fetches about £8 per ton in Liverpool). Nowhere else in the world would one find such a valuable feed or fertilizer burnt.

The Government vainly endeavors to collect the fifty lira per hectare rent. Three years ago fifteen paid rent, in 1928 two paid, in 1927 nobody paid.

All the time deputations of natives wait on the Governor with complaints of non-payment of wages, but the planters have no money, the Government has none for agricultural loans and the Banca d'Italia, after having been badly struck a few times closed down; the planters not owning the land, have no security to offer.

Out of the situation the Arabs and Indians are growing rich. They buy the crop at ten lira per kilo (the full price being fifteen) and advance sufficient money for the payment of wages, etc.

Fordson tractors are used for ploughing and the cotton is shipped from Merka, being transported across the sand hills by camels.

The water supply sometimes fails, even during the short cotton season, May-November.

The further from the river the farm is situated the poorer the land, and, of course, the greater liability of the water-supply failing.

A central ginnery and cotton store of concrete is now being constructed on the edge of the irrigated area about fifteen kilometres from Merka, this is being done by the Government.

The third place where planting is done on a large scale is at Joar, or, as it is now called, Villaggio Duca degli Abruzzi.

I went all over this plantation with the Director Dott. Scassellati, and it is a really fine place.

The farm was originally started by the duke to demonstrate what could be done in the colony. Later it was turned into a company, the Societa Agricola Italo Somala, locally known as the "Sais".

I am told the capital expenditure has been a million and a half sterling and for the past two years a dividend has been paid.

Scassellati is a very capable man and undoubtedly a fine organizer. He was a professor of agriculture at some university in Italy and came to Somaliland with H.R.H. ten years ago, when they spent two years in exploration, surveys and examination of soils; operations were commenced eight years ago.

The farm is 134 kilometres by road from Mogadishu and 124 by the railway. It is 66 kilometres distant from the coast and the altitude is 340 feet. It is the only European plantation north of Mogadishu.

They now have 12,350 acres in hand, not including native villages and their allotments of land. There are no uncultivated areas, no swamps and no waste land.

Further areas are now being cleared and some six or seven kilometres up the river is a large cattle ranch where they breed work oxen, beef animals, etc.

The organization is similar to that of our Central American Divisions and the equipment very complete as may be judged from the following :

Sugar Factory - of large capacity and very up-to-date.

Distillery - now being built.

Director's House.

Bungalows - a large number of these for white employees.

R.C. Church.

Mission Buildings.

Hospital for White Employees - Italian doctor and nurses.

Hospital for Natives.

Engine Sheds and Workshops.

Offices.

Cotton stores (2) .

Ginnery - with baling room and store.



Oil Extraction Plant - equipped with machinery for handling sesame, sunflower and castor seed, also making oil cake for cattle feed.

Fertilizer Mixing Room.

Blacksmith's Shop.

Machine Shops: very fully equipped.

Carpenter's shop: with wood working machiner.

Store rooms for above shops.

Electric Light Plant.

Waterworks - filtering and pumping to houses, etc.

Cow Sheds and Stables:

Theatre for cinematograph.

Hotel and Restaurant.

Brick-making Plant - situated on a lateritic outcrop near the village.

Concrete Plate - for pipes, fence posts, etc.

Banana Packing - now being built about 40' x 40'.  
House

Radio Station - messages are relayed from the Government station at Afgoi.

Police Barracks:

All the above are of brick and reinforced concrete construction.

The plantation is divided into six farms each with a white manager and two white assistants, in addition there are various heads of departments such as the men in charge of the sugar factory, oil plant, etc.

The farms are complete units with their bungalows for white men, stables and cattle sheds, yard for drying and sorting cotton, warehouse, 100' x 40', and native village.

The personnel consists of some eighty Italians and about 6000 natives. There are 1800 native families living on the estate and each family has a plot of ground on which to grow food and cotton, wages are slightly less than at Gemale, a certain amount of outside labor is required during such times as the cotton picking season.

As a whole, I think the labor compares favorably with

that

that in C.A., most of the work is done by task but cotton picking and jobs of that nature are piece work. From what I could gather the laborers seemed contented but discipline is very strict and all rules are rigidly enforced.

There are 52 kilometers of 60 cm. track and 85 miles of excellent roads. The principal canals run a distance of over 80 kilometres and land is irrigated eleven kilometers from the river.

Flat tractors and trucks are used extensively and but little cultivation is now done with oxen.

Four ton Deutz petrol locomotives are used on the plantation railway.

At the commencement the materials were taken from Afgoi by river but with the advent of the railway all the river equipment except one launch has been scrapped.

The soil is very similar to that in the Gemale district, a dark clay loam fairly friable for the first 18", the subsoil is rather hard and inclined to pack, there is a great depth of soil. I have seen pits eight and ten feet deep with no appreciable difference between the soil, at a depth of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ' down to 8', test holes have been dug to a depth of ten metres and the same soil found, only, of course, denser and heavier.

The principal crops grown are sugar, cotton, maize, sim-sim, castor bean and sunflower.

When I was on the plantation they were picking a heavy crop of excellent cotton from some 3400 acres, there are about 4000 acres under cane, the balance under the other crops mentioned above with some large areas of soy beans and other nitrogenous crops for ploughing under.

A regular rotation is practised and the land is in excellent condition.

Much experimental work is being done and some three hundred acres are set aside for this purpose, amongst other things I saw, either in the propagating sheds or planted out, were citrus fruits, mangoes, pineapples, soursop, sugar apple, guavas, paw-paw, avocado pears, etc., also cocanuts, kapok, coffee, cocoa, tea, and innumerable other trees and plants, of course many of these are grown purely as a matter of interest and could not be planted commercially. Cocanuts grow and look well, for instance, but the nuts are very poor indeed; however, a lot of practical work is done in connection with cotton and maize, trying out various fertilizers and methods of cultivation, etc.

One hundred and fifty acres are now in bananas and a lot of experimental work is being carried out. There are some twelve varieties now growing in the experiment fields under different conditions of fertilization, cultivation, etc.

These



These experimental plots have been planted recently and it was difficult to distinguish the varieties, but in different parts of the plantation I saw Cavendish, Cawle Lady, finger apple, Juba and two other native varieties and three kinds of plantain. The Cavendish looked by far the best.

In one experimental plot I believe Gros Michel were growing, but they were very small, only about four feet high. I did not wish to exhibit a too intense interest in bananas and so did not enquire about them.

Scassalati told me that they were going to plant on a large scale, and, as noted in the foregoing, they are building a packing shed. So far they have made no shipments.

They are quite evidently much interested in the business, and I noticed two books on banana cultivation in the Director's office.

I have no doubt that eventually they will settle on the Cavendish which is undoubtedly best adapted to their conditions; very careful records are being kept of all experiments.

The roads and fields are lined with kapok, casuarina and other trees in double rows and after two or three more years growth these will greatly minimize the danger of blow-downs.

With the tramway all through the plantation, the railway to Mogadishu, and as they hope, after two and a half years, a harbor, they will, as far as transportation goes, be well equipped as there is ample capital and influence to secure the ships.

The land can produce bananas and, with cultivation and fertilization, for many years, the fruit will not be of good quality, but no doubt will be readily saleable at a remunerative price in a country where there is no competition.

The only catch that I can see in it is that frequently the water fails during February, March and April; in the case of the crops grown at present this does not greatly matter as they plant in May and harvest is over by the end of November. It does, however, harm the sugar cane and any perennial or retuned crop, and two months without water during the period of intense heat would be disastrous with bananas.

A short time ago the Duke left and went to Jibuty in French Somaliland, from there he is making a three or four months trip through Abyssinia "to explore the sources of the Webi Shibeli". As, however, this was done forty-one years ago by our Government and is thoroughly surveyed and mapped, I made some enquiries, but only found out that he is accompanied by a soil chemist, an engineer and a geologist. From this I feel certain that H.R.H. has gone to look for a dam site on the Abyssinian border so that the water supply can be assured and, possibly, increased.

It is at "Sais" that the Somaliland banana business will be started, both the Duke and his manager, Scassaleti, are clever and energetic men, and if by any means the provision of an adequate

water

water supply and a harbor is possible they will put it through. Eventually their lead will be followed by the irresponsible youths of Gemale.

Nos. V. and VI. of "La Somalia Italiana", pages 45 and 27, contain references to the water supply, with translations. I also send a small book given me by Dr. Scasselati which gives an idea of the scope and organization of the plantation although considerable extensions in the area cultivated have been made in the two-and-a-half years since it was written.

There is little to write about respecting cultivations on the Juba river.

The history of planting on this river is a long record of failures and considerable sums of money have been lost.

The soil, as a whole, is inferior to that along the Webi Shebeli while they have the same difficulty with low water, the river does not go quite dry but on the other hand it does not flood and annually inundates a large area as is stated in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica".

Capt. Fortunati, the resident at Jelib, showed me a photograph, taken early this year, of natives crossing the river near Jelib, and in mid-stream the water came to their knees.

At the present time the river is rising and falling in the most extraordinary manner; while I was at Jelib it fell 1.24 metres in twenty-four hours. The reason is, I believe, that there is a ten foot rise and fall of the tide at the river mouth, and a large volume of river water which is backed up by the sea is released at low tide. When the river is low the sea water comes up nearly thirty kilometers - nearly to Yomte.

Local rains do not affect the river and it does not overflow its banks, in many places where there is a fringe of woodland along the margin I found 6" - 8" of dried leaves, the bottom two inches rotten and decayed, clear proof of the absence of floods, I also looked carefully for watermarks in the trees, but found none, nor any sign of silt.

The river occasionally runs into the "Deshecks" which are depressions in the land, some of considerable area, here the water lies until evaporated, little or nothing grows in these "Deshecks", the deposit left by the river caking and becoming like a coating of cement.

On the whole river there are only two Europeans planting; one, a Greek of peasant origin, has a place of just under one hundred acres, this spot is quite the best soil I saw but it is surrounded by sandhills and there is no good land in the vicinity, he grows maize and cotton and makes a fair living.

Count Enrico Frankestein, a Pole who is a naturalized Italian citizen, has been planting since early in 1910 near Margherita; the Count is a man of considerable private means and until last year his annual loss on the plantation is stated to have been between two and four thousand pounds, last year he made a small

profit



profit but this year there will be a big loss. I met him several times and he is interesting but not very practical, I heard he had applied to the Governor for permission to sell the place, it is freehold, the last time I saw him he had malaria badly and was very discouraged and tired of it.

There are several thousand acres in the estate and it is well equipped, irrigation is by three eight inch centrifugal pumps driven by portable steam engines burning wood.

Not more than four hundred acres are under cultivation now and the three other white men he employs appear to spend their time in their houses. Frankenstein spends half his time in Rome and Paris.

This place will probably close down next year.

The corn and cotton grown is not nearly as good as that at Joar and the land probably requires resting, a few bananas are being planted, as at Joar the Cavendish look best.

Gros Michel would not thrive in the heavy soil and a vast expenditure of capital would be required before any quantity of Cavendish could be shipped. (The native variety known as the Juba is not shippable).

The river is useless for transportation six months out of the twelve and not less than a hundred miles of railway would be required, a breakwater and dock would have to be constructed at Kismayu, owing to sand banks no harbor could be made at the mouth of the river, and, thirdly, a big dam would have to be constructed to conserve water for the dry season, this coupled with the fact that there is no banana land on the river, at all events, within 150 miles of the coast completely eliminates this district as a banana producing area.

Labor is supplied by the Goshu negroes who have villages along the banks where they plant patches of bananas for own use, at present I doubt whether two hundred stems per month are available for export, and this of wretched quality native varieties.

There is one Englishman on the river who is hanging on to a defunct cotton plantation and trying to collect some money from the company, meantime he supports himself by selling bits of the machinery, tin roofs, etc. This is the plantation mentioned on Page 46 of Dracopoli's book on Juba land, which I am returning.

On this plantation Sisal was tried but proved a failure.

The river Juba varies little in width at any part, it would average 60 yards, until close to the mouth and, when in flood the depth is about 20', the current is 2 1/2 m.p.h.

#### Soils.

There is no banana soil on either of these rivers and no soil remotely resembling the alluvial river deposits of C.A.

As noted in the foregoing there is a littoral belt of sandy soil which takes the form of ridges parallel with the coast, some of these ridges are shifting dunes of loose sand, others carry a scanty growth of thorn bush, in some parts where this soil has hardened and set the growth of thorn bush becomes heavier and some grass grows, furnishing fair grazing during the rains.

Under this sandy littoral formation is coral rock at varying depths, or a compacter decomposed coral limestone formation.

Proceeding from the coast inland one comes to the alluvia plain which has been formed by the two rivers, here there are two types of soil with, of course, variations. The first and elder is the red soil, a lateritic formation very dense in texture, intensely hard in the dry season and not adapted to agriculture, it crops up in areas all over the plain and is probably a very old formation on which has been deposited the second type of soil, the black, or "Arra Medou".

The red clay type soil is used for brickmaking and on most farms, both the Duke's and the farms at Gemale, there are out-crops where bricks are made.

The black soil varies somewhat in color, the best of it is within five miles of the river. It is a clay loam inclined to pack and become hard, in some parts there is a little coarse sand mixed with it. There is a considerable depth of this class of soil and it is stated that a chemical analysis gives much the same results at all depths.

The soil is usually very hard at a depth of two feet but under cultivation and irrigation is more friable.

On the farm at Joar the lime content is stated to be 2.5%.

This is not a banana soil, although it will grow the fruit, and it is hardly possible to classify it in terms of years as irrigation, cultivation, green manuring and other fertilization is required and will be used.

I should like to add that the term "black soil" is applied to all soils other than the red, and some, or most, of the soils are brown colored loams.

On page 11 of the publication regarding the "Sais" some analyses of soils are given with a footnote that for further information on the subject consult the Report of Stefanini and Paoli "Researches, etc. in Southern Somaliland", Published by the Istituto Agricolo Coloniale Italiano, Firenze, 1916.

Crops: Bananas  
and Plantains.

"Banana" is applied indiscriminately to both bananas and plantains.

The Cavendish (local name Hindi) appears to have been introduced fairly recently. It is by far the most promising of any varieties which I saw.

"Baladi"



"Baladi" grows about 14'-18' high, the fruit is 4"-4½" in length and a greenish yellow when ripe, a thin skinned variety, very poor flavour, bunches usually 6 or 7 hands and open.

"Soba el sit", a short 3"-3½" thick fruit with thin skin, tasteless, and mealy. Trees grow 12'-14' high and bunches are small and compact.

Juba fruit 5"-6" in length, green when ripe, never becomes yellow, when thoroughly ripe the skin is covered with black blotches, very thin skinned, flavour resembles the apple banana, tree grows 14'-16' in height, bunches small and open handed.

None of the above three native varieties would be shippable.

In addition, I noticed the Lady Finger, Apple, Red, and a variety closely resembling the Creole with a red midrib to the leaf, otherwise green.

Unless, perhaps, in one of the newly planted experimental plots at Joar, I did not see any Gros Michel.

The Horse Plantain is the one most commonly grown.

Rubber is being experimented with at Gemale and Joar.

Pineapples as above, but are not successful.

Oil Palm also being tried out but soil appears too heavy.

Cocoanuts owing to heavy soil have proved a failure, can be grown as ornamental trees.

Cotton. Egyptian type cotton is grown. It takes five months to grow. In the Gemale district there are 36,000 acres in cotton, at Joar about 3,000 native cultivations and those on the Juda, amounting to about another 3,000 acres. The yield is stated to be 480 lbs. cleaned cotton per acre on the irrigated lands.

Sisal. This has been tried by two companies on the Juba but proved a failure, the deep strong loam is totally unsuited to this crop.

Kapok (Silk-cotton tree). The planting of this has been much boomed by the Director of the Government Experiment Station at Gemale, who did not strike me as a very efficient person. He was unable to say what yield per acre might be expected. The Director of the Duke's farm gives it as one kilo in the third year after the tree is set out. Kapok has been grown for ten years at Gemale and the trees grow to a great size. They should be planted not less than 60' x 60'. The fibre fetches twentyfive lira per kilo in Italy.

Rice is not grown. It can not compete with that imported from the East.

Maize is grown extensively and forms part of the totation in the cotton farms; except at Joar ("Sais") no attention is paid to the seed and the production per acre is small, is a 90 day crop.

Castor Bean. Several hundred acres of this is grown at Joar each year and the oil exported to Italy. It is grown nowhere else in the country.

Cassana. I saw only one small field of this, on the Juba.

Sesame (native Sim-Sim), *Sesamum Indicum*, is grown largely both by natives and Europeans. The natives use the oil for cooking. A quantity is sent to Italy where the oil is used to adulterate olive-oil. The yield is uncertain but would appear to be about 15 bushels per acre, when grown under irrigation.

Miscellaneous. The paw-paw is the only fruit grown to any extent, except at Joar and the Government station at Gemale where most of the tropical fruits can be seen, the indications are that none of them could be grown commercially. In the irrigated gardens of the farms most of the European vegetables are grown such as carrots, turnips, beets and even lettuce.

"Dura", a red-seeded variety of millet is grown by the natives and made into bread.

Sugar is only grown commercially in the "Sais" plantation at Joar. There are a few very small patches of it grown by natives on the river banks.

#### Plant Diseases and Pests.

The isolated situation of the two main centres of cultivation, surrounded as they are by desert country for miles, safeguards the plantations to some extent against the introduction of diseases, and pests. In any case the farms in Somaliland would appear to have only a tithe of the insect pests and plant diseases with which the Kenya planters have to contend.

I saw no disease amongst bananas nor any sign of the banana weevil.

With maize, they have a little trouble with worms in the ear, and some with the stalk borer; birds, which swarm in Somaliland, are sometimes troublesome.

Sugar and sesame seem not to have any insect pests or diseases worth taking notice of.

The pink ball weevil and two kinds of leaf-eating caterpillar attack the cotton but are not sufficiently numerous to endanger the crop. Leaf eating ants cause some damage and also cut-worms with the young cotton.

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#### Cattle, etc.

Stock raising is the principal industry of Italian Somaliland and approximately 85% of the population is engaged in it.

This



This is a purely native business, the only part the European takes in it is the purchase and export of hides. One of the many European failures on the Juba river is commemorated by the ruins of a large factory near Margherita where some Italians tried to run a packing plant, at the start they bought their cattle at from thirty to forty shillings per head but the supply could not be contracted for and very soon the Somali was charging five and six pounds and the factory closed.

The cattle are mostly of a Zabu strain, although some herds from the interior are of purely native stock, small and weedy with immense horns.

There is no market for the meat other than the local one and a few head shipped now and again to Zanzibar.

The whole country swarms with cattle, camels, which by the way are never ridden, goats and black headed Indian sheep.

There are numbers of donkeys also but no horses or mules, except those imported by the Italians. There are some tsetse belts in the Jube river but none apparently in the Webi Shebeli.

The desert-bred cattle are only watered three times a week and sometimes only twice, one finds them grazing in the dried-up grass thirty miles from any water and they appear to be in fairly good condition, the meat, however, is wretched stuff.

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Areas Examined

Areas:

Examined:

Following are notes on some of the localities visited:

Hafun (Mijjartem), Northern Somaliland.

A horrible place, all sand and bare rock, very hot indeed. Sand storms all over the place, it is like this throughout July, August and September. No vegetation whatever near the coast and inland, three or four miles, only a few low thorn-bushes half buried in drifting sand.

There is a small army post here and a company employing 350 men is engaged in making salt (which must be full of sand) on a large scale.

There is no harbour and there are strong currents which are dangerous as they are constantly shifting.

Mogadishu to Wanle via Afgoi.

For the first fifteen miles a coral rock road with a very bad surface leads across sand ridges, there is a very sparse growth of thorn-bush and some cactus. The road then drops down to the plain through which the river runs.

At Afgoi is the plantation on which a colonization scheme is being worked out with Italians (I have referred to this in another part of this report).

The river at Afgoi is 50 yards wide, the water is 8' from the top of the banks and the current 3 m.p.h. depth at railway bridge 14'.

I noticed a clump of Lady Finger bananas in the irrigated garden of the Radio Station, the leaves of these bananas were badly ribboned by the wind.

Close to the river there were cracks in the soil 2" wide and two feet deep.

On the West side of the river there are numerous native fields prepared in squares 6' x 8" with a ridge of soil around them. There is nothing growing now as the rains have failed and the natives are waiting for the October and November rains to plant their maize, sesame and milled. (These later rains have also failed.)



The soil at Afgoi is a dark brown clay loam, very hard packed at a depth of 2-1/2' but fairly friable for the first 18", it is very dry and at a distance of 150 yards from the river and a depth of four feet is absolutely dry, bricks are being made near the village.

Irrigation, by steam pump, is confined to the Italian colony plantation.

West of the river the soil continues the same as noted above all the way to Wanle except in two places where it is a laterite formation, very dense and hard.

The vegetation is scattered thorn bush, camel thorn, acacia, of two or three varieties, cactus, aloes and a tussocky grass, while in some places, particularly in those where there is the lateritic soil, there are areas of bare earth.

#### To Afgoi and Mallale.

Turning South from Afgoi the road follows the river, there are a number of native villages on both sides of the river and the land has been cultivated for a distance of two miles back on either bank for many years; there are a few large trees, the Baobab principally, along the river bank. (The bark of a smaller variety of this tree gives a useful fibre), but nothing in the nature of forest, nor are there any signs that the woodland ever extended beyond the seepage area of the river.

I made careful search but found no trace of silt and the people I spoke to assured me that the river never floods, for the remainder of the trip the road ran through exactly the same soil as found at Afgoi and the thorn bush and cactus growth continues right up to the river bank. I turned back just beyond Audegle on the edge of the irrigated area of which Gemale is the centre.

The small swamp area on the west side of the river near Mobarech was quite dry and is what is known as a "Desheck" or an area of low land where water gathers during the rains, which quickly dries up again when the rains cease.

I took a soil sample at the end of the day's run - at 3" the formation is shale-like, no doubt the result of flooding many years ago; it is very hard and breaks away in flat cakes. I did not go out to the plantation as I was angling for an invitation to visit them a little later on.

Isha Baidoa

Isha Baidoa Via Afgoi, Audegle & Burakaba.

There is really nothing to say about this line, soils, growth, etc., being exactly the same as along the road to Wanle, just before reaching Burakaba the soil becomes gravelly and the first of the water courses is crossed, is quite dry and only contains water during the rains. This also applies to the Bohol Warak, Edda and the Abie Ashu, a water hole at Urugui contained a little water, sufficient for the local stock.

Owing to the dryness of the country most of the cattle are away near the rivers.

Burakaba is the first of the "Burs" or hills of bare rock which are dotted over the plain to the westward. The land rises from the river going west but the rise is so gradual as to be imperceptible, Kassubbi being about 100 metres and Burakaba about 190. In the Burakaba region the vegetation is even poorer than at Audegle and Wanle and consists of little stunted bushes 3'-4' high.

Isha Baidoa is typical of all the small towns, it is composed of the resident's bungalow and two or three more for the radio staff. A small compound with huts for the soldiers and a native village with a few of the huts occupied by Arab shopkeepers.

There is no possibility of any of this land being brought under cultivation, in some parts along the road there are considerable areas of coarse red sand.

From Mogadishu, Isha Baidoa is 206 kilometers, and 125 miles inland from the coast.

To Bulu Berti via Mahaddei.

This, all the way, is exactly as reported in the line from Afgoi to Audegle, considerable herds of cattle grazing and some native corn fields prepared and waiting for rain to be planted.

There are no European cultivations except that of the Duke of Abruzzi at Joar which I have described elsewhere in this report.

I believe that the soil at Joar is slightly better than elsewhere, at any rate the soil of uncultivated areas in the vicinity appears to be a little more friable although in other respects about the same.

The best land is within five miles of either bank, beyond this line there is a gradual change

and



and the soil becomes lighter in color.

From the appearance of the river it would seem that there is some rain in the mountains, the water carrying a lot of mud.

River averages about 60 yards in width.

Merka Irrigated Area (Gemale).

I spent five days in the farm of Count Beria and saw a number of other farms, also spending a day on the Government Experiment Station.

Beria's farm is of 1200 acres. He grows the usual crops, cotton, sim-sim and maize. This farm is more completely equipped than most of the farms in the district, ploughing is done with "Fordson" tractors and cotton is ginned for the surrounding plantations.

In the early part of this year the Director of Agriculture sent a bulletin to all the planters in which he urged them to plant bananas, calling their attention to the importation of foreign grown bananas having been prohibited by Mussolini, and stating that up until the time when this decree came into effect Italy had been importing bananas to the value of Lire 120,000,000 annually.

Practically all the planters in this district have planted a few acres but they quite obviously know nothing at all about the fruit. In several places I saw two or three different kinds of bananas mixed with plantains growing in the same plot of ground.

It was difficult to estimate the area in bananas, probably it is about 250 acres all told, of which 150 are this year's plantings.

Tomolo, one of the planters, is exporting a few branches to Italy each month, he pays Lire 1.20 per kilo on the plantation and ships them to Mojadiscio by his motor-trucks.

So far I could not find that the planters in the district were very enthusiastic about the new crop, and there does not seem to be anyone to teach them anything about bananas and how to grow them.

At the Government Experiment Station they have a lot of things growing but the farm is not in very capable hands. Little or nothing is being done with cotton or maize, however, as a demonstration of what can be grown, not necessarily commercially, it is interesting.

Most

Most of the tropical fruits are grown, also rubber and several kinds of fibre producing plants and trees, nearly all the European vegetables and many ornamental shrubs and trees.

They have just commenced to plant out some bananas, of a native variety, there is also one old cultivation on the farm but it is a pretty hopeless mess of several kinds of bananas mixed up with plantains.

On one or two of the cotton plantations I saw Cavendish growing and, as everywhere else, they looked far better than any other variety.

The country is very open and much closer to the sea than the "Sais" plantation at Joar and possibly wind breaks might be required. Trees, Casuarina, Kapok, Eucalyptus, Tamarind, Royal Poinciana, etc., are now being planted along the roadsides and grow well, such plantings could be easily extended.

The irrigated area is all on the east side of the river, the land on the west bank being low and swampy during the rains.

There is a marked difference in the cotton grown close to the river and that grown on the edge of the district towards the sandhills.

Bananas, if grown, would have to replace cotton as there is not sufficient water to extend the present area cultivated. There are probably about ten thousand acres in the vicinity of the river which would grow Cavendish. I do not think Gros Michel would be a success.

Ploughing with a subsoil plough at a good depth with powerful tractors might prove a help, for the soil is very hard at a depth of two to three feet, the soil near the river is the same type of clay loam as that at Joar, the first eighteen inches being fairly friable.

In general the farming here is not nearly as good as that at Joar, few of the farmers growing crops such as day beans and cow-peas.

There is one principal canal and five secondary canals. These were constructed by the Government. The smaller canals are made by the planters. The principal canal is stated to deliver thirty cubic metres per second. As at Joar the water supply often fails, as it did this year for two and a half months.

There



There will be nothing done with bananas in this district for some time to come. A railway is essential to handle any quantity of fruit. There are not sufficient motor trucks available to transport more than a few hundred bunches and certainly no person is going to invest in a fleet of trucks to transport fruit once a month. Then again, during rains the roads are impassable. Any developments will come after the provision of a railway, to connect with the present line at Afgoi, and a harbour, until such time the exportation of bananas from this district will be limited to a few hundred stems per month (at present it is a few dozen).

Probably the production of this area will eventually be between one and one and a half million per annum of Cavendish, allowing that a full supply of water is available.

Merka to Jelib.

This Webi Gofka is dry most of the year and the Wedi Shebeli near Furugle is narrower than at Afgoi and it becomes gradually smaller until at Eleukali it has dwindled away considerably. Much of the swamp land shown on the map is dry most of the year and no doubt the two dams at Gemale and Joar have diverted the water which used to run into these low places.

There are few villages and few cultivations in this part and the country from Brava to the Juba river is a game reserve, the soil is poor, a light colored clay loam with some large area of sandy soil - nothing could be done in this district and it will probably always remain a grazing ground.

The natural growth is the usual thorn bush but probably only half as thick and half as high as that seen further north.

This road brought me to the Juba some miles above Jelid where I camped for the night.

I made a number of other trips in the Webi Shibeli district and to the north of Magadishu but the foregoing description of the localities visited tells the whole story, elsewhere it was all exactly the same sand and poor clay loam and thorn bush scrub.

JUBA  
River.

After hearing a lot about this river and what a wonderful thing it was from people who knew nothing about it, as I found later, I expected to see some good land but the lands in the vicinity of this river are not as good as on the Shibeli.

Jelid to Mismayu.

From Jelib I went, on the road which runs close to the river on the east side, via Margherita to Jumbo; the only good patch of land was the farm of the Greek at Beled Elai where there is a good black loam soil.

The soil is a light brown clay loam, not very friable, there is no sign of silt and the vegetation is similar to that in the Shibeli, thorn bush with a few large trees close to the river, the better parts grow fair crops of corn and cotton under irrigation and immediately on the river bank there are a few patches of native bananas and plantations.

There is no tsetse fly and I saw large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep.



In a small enclosure near Count Frankenstein's house I saw some Cavendish growing with a couple of nine hand stems hanging. This was close to the river and was formerly a vegetable garden. The plants looked quite well and the bunches were well-formed and developed.

The Cavendish, as I found in Brazil, will thrive in soils and under conditions where the Gros Michel could not possibly live, or, if it lived, would produce the poorest sort of fruit and that for only a few years.

The native bananas, the local variety ("Juba") principally, did not look at all flourishing, being yellow and stunted looking things.

Just after leaving Marguerita the soil changes and there are patches of red and yellow sand. This is on the edge of the sand dune land on the coast.

The Juba is a somewhat larger river than the Shibeli, it varies little in width except at Jumbo where it is 250 yards wide. Elsewhere the average width is eighty yards.

#### West Side of Juba.

To the south and west the coastal lands consist of sand ridges for fifteen miles inland. Behind this is a great plain broken in a few places by the wide shallow water courses, now dry.

The Desmek Wama is a large shallow depression about two miles wide with a gravelly and sandy soil. During the rains it filled up the Lak Dera bringing water down from the Lorian Swamp. There is also another swamp called, I believe, the El Lin, the descent to this is very gradual as is the rise on the other side to the plain. This also was bone dry as was the Lak Rergatta another depression which holds water during the rains and is surrounded by thick thorn jungle.

A lot of long and expensive trestles would be required to bridge these places in the event of a railway being constructed.

All the way the country is the same depressing wilderness of thorn bush. It is practically uninhabited as except along the river bank there are only three small villages between Yonte and Kuna Mal.

Afmadu is a small military post with a radio station and landing field for planes. There is a small native village at this point and a few cattle graze, water is found in deep wells dug in the bed of the Lak Dera.

A long narrow island is formed by the Webi Yero and the Juba and on the west bank is a small patch of woodland about 300 yards in width. This is at the north end of the island and the soil here is a coarse loam, very hard. The middle third of the island has a red laterite soil very poor and the southern part a similar soil to that found on the banks of the main stream; a coarse clay loam.

Upstream from this place the country is open right to the river bank and the soil for a few Kilometres is red laterite. Then a stretch of light brown clay loam. The surface of this latter being usually a powdery mulch for the first three or four inches.

Along the river bank there are a number of "Dom" palms growing. The seeds of this palm are the basis of "vegetable ivory," nothing is being done with them, so possibly it is not the correct variety for export.

I saw only traces of silt and then at a depth of 2 1/2'-3' and no soil which could be classed as banana soil, nor did I see any extent of land with the same type of soil. It is much more variable than along the Webi Shibeli.

The foregoing condenses the observations made during many trips both by car over the trails and in a small boat with outboard-motor.

Elsewhere in this report I have written about the very considerable difficulties in the way of any development of this Juba region.

At least one hundred miles of railway would have to be built, a harbor and dock provided and a big barrage constructed on the river failing which, some 400 Kilometres of railway will have to be built to connect up, with the present line. Finally there is no good soil and a scarcity of labor.

Some small amount of fruit may be grown but as a big source of supply for exportation there are no possibilities.

(Signed) J.M. Gent.



ITALIAN SOMALILAND.

Distances by Sea.

Genoa to Naples	337 miles
Naples to Port Said	1432 "
Port Said to Suez	88 "
Suez to Aden	1310 "
Aden to Mogadishu	<u>1275 "</u>
	4442 "
Mogadishu to Naples	4105 miles.
(Santos to London 5399 miles)	

Water temperature through the Red Sea,  
September 12th - September 17. averaged 88°  
by day.

On the ship by which I travelled the canal  
passage took 11 1/2 hours and taking oil at Aden  
6 hours.

The approximate time from Mogadishu to Naples,  
taking oil southbound, would be a fraction over twelve  
days, which allows a twelve hour canal passage.

J.M.G.

# DOCUMENT FILE

## NOTE

SEE 865a.00/3 FOR Report #

FROM Aden ( Hurst ) DATED March 1, 1931  
TO NAME 1-1172 070

REGARDING: Italian Colonial Possessions Allocated to the  
Aden Consulate. Somaliland.

fp

865B.00/12

865B.00



**Voluntary Economic and Political Report**

**ITALIAN COLONIAL POSSESSIONS ALLOCATED TO THE  
ADEN CONSULATE**

**PART I. ERITREA**

**PART II. SOMALILAND**

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**From:**

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**Carlton Hurst  
American Consul**

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<b>Aden, Arabia,</b>	<b>Date of Completion:</b>	<b>March 1, 1931</b>
	<b>Date of Mailing:</b>	<b>March 11, 1931</b>

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## GENERAL ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

With the unity and independence of Italy fully assured, the spirit of the country unconsciously felt the need of expansion to lands beyond the sea as fields for the development of the superfluous vitality of its people, and outlets for its increasing population. New markets for the absorption of Italian manufactures, and new sources from which to draw supplies of raw materials were required. In entering upon its present policy of colonial expansion the alimentary and industrial independence of the mother country was regarded as of primary importance. Of its 5 colonies, comprising Tripoli, Cirenaica, Eritrea, Somaliland and Oltregiuba, Eritrea and Somaliland were the first in the history of these conquests and were possessed during the last 20 years of the 19th century. A Governor who reports to the Minister of the Colonies directs the politics and administration, is the chief of the naval and land forces of each of these two colonies and has the power to declare a state of siege whenever public interests demand. Each colony is subdivided for purposes of administration. In Eritrea the Governor is assisted by a Council of Administration composed of the Governor who presides, the secretary general, the director of civil affairs and of finance, the commander of the troops and other functionaries when their presence is desired. In Somaliland a similar council exists as well as departments of agriculture, colonization, public works, railroad construction, and the like. Justice in these two colonies is administered through competent local

local courts invested with powers analagous to those of the courts of Italy.

Efforts are made both by the Ministry of the Colonies at Rome and by its local representatives to foment industrial activity in the colonies and exploit their natural resources. To this end shipping lines connecting the colonies with the mother country are encouraged and reciprocal customs duties authorized. Mineral concessions are granted to Italians only or to companies legally constituted of which the majority of the administrators and technical directors are Italians. When a mineral bed is discovered, the Governor is notified who may grant a concession for 50 years under certain conditions.

The State assumes nominal control of the lands not cultivated and not recognized as belonging to native land holders and regulates questions regarding concessions for their cultivation and colonization.

Government schools have been in operation in Eritrea for a number of years where elementary instruction is imparted and Italian taught, while in Somaliland the educational system, introduced more recently, is on a limited scale.

Postal, telegraph and telephone services correspond in all of the colonies to those of the mother country, the postal tariff is the same as in Italy, but the telegraph rates are higher.



PART I. ERITREA

INTRODUCTION

To the Aden Consulate has been allocated informal jurisdiction over the Italian Colony of Eritrea, which is separated from the Aden Protectorate by the Red Sea and the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb. The general form of Eritrea is that of an obtuse triangle with its base running in a northerly direction along the west coast of the Red Sea and extending from Cape Dumeirah on the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb to Cape Kasar, its coastal length being about 670 miles. Anglo-Egyptian Sudan lies to the north and west of the colony, Ethiopia or Abyssinia to the south and west, while a line cutting across the southernmost end separates it from French Somaliland. The total area of Eritrea, according to statistics published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome, is (118,609 kilometers <sup>2</sup>) 44,795 square miles, comprising (1,452 kilometers <sup>2</sup>) 560 square miles of the archipelago of Dahlak, which is composed of 122 islands. The largest of these islands has an area of (900 kilometers <sup>2</sup>) 347 square miles. There are other numerous islands near the peninsula of Buri and along the coast of Dancalia.

The native population of 410,000, is made up of many groups, anthropologically uniform, but diversified in language, social customs and religion. The plains and foothills are occupied chiefly by semi-nomadic shepherds largely of Arab or Hamitic stock. In the southern regions, Afar and Somali form the bulk of the population, while Ethiopians dwell on the plateau. Added to the native population there are about 5,000

Italian

Italian inhabitants, and some 500 Europeans of different nationalities.

The almost triangular form of the country does not form a geographical entity, being a more or less artificial unit. The western part contiguous to Ethiopia of an elevated plain which gradually slopes toward the Red Sea north of Massawa, while a mountain chain passing through Doncalia rises abruptly from the coast. In the mountainous region of Doncalia are some extinct volcanoes but the summits of Ertu-Ali and Alid are hidden by clouds of smoke. This volcanic formation has created numerous thermal and mineral springs in the region of Doncalia. Corresponding to the irregularities of the surface of the colony the climate is diversified, and ranges from tropical heat along the coast to temperate weather in the higher altitudes. The climate of the coast zone is hot and humid, the highest temperature being reached around Massawa, while in the mountains and mountain valleys having an altitude of some 8,000 feet or more, the climate is generally moderate.

Dense forests cover large sections of the western part of the country interspersed with tracts of arable land. So varied is the fauna of the Colony that in some parts the olive tree flourishes, and in others the date palm.

Although the country possesses no navigable rivers, the Setit and the Gash or Mareb rivers and their tributaries water the land through which they flow rendering  
it



it fertile and productive. Beside these, the valleys of intermittent streams, which become rushing torrents during the rainy season and are dry during the summer, form highways into the interior. Along the courses of these valley routes which reach the Red Sea run caravan routes flanked by telegraph lines.

#### GOVERNMENT

Early in 1870, Assab and the region around the bay of Assab were purchased from Sultan Berehan of Raheita for \$9,400, in order to acquire a coaling base for an Italian steamship company, and this purchase formed the nucleus of Italy's colonial possessions on the Red Sea. This territory was augmented by subsequent purchases and <sup>in</sup> negotiations until/January, 1890, the various Italian possessions on the Red Sea were united in one province to which the name of Colony of Eritrea was given. This name is derived from the Roman name of Erythraeum Mare. The frontiers of the colony were further defined by subsequent treaties and agreements, and the work of organizing the administration of the country on a civil basis was inaugurated. The area was divided into 7 commissariats, three of which were grouped, in 1929, into the single Regional Commissariat of the Uplands with Asmara as its capital; the Western Lowlands forming another Regional Commissariat with its capital at Agordat; a third Regional Commissariat being that of the Eastern Lowlands with the capital at Massawa; while Assab became the capital of the Commissariat of that name embracing Southern Dancalia.

To

To a Civil Governor nominated by the King of Italy is entrusted an autonomous administration and the management of the finances of the Colony.

The military forces comprise 200 commissioned and non-commissioned Italians, and about 4,000 native troops. In addition to these a police force is maintained.

#### PRINCIPAL TOWNS

A relatively small part of the population resides in fixed abodes, many of the inhabitants being nomads or semi-nomads, living in encampments and pitching their tents in different localities generally chosen for proximity to sources of water. The chief cities of Eritrea are Asmara, the capital of the Colony, Massawa (also written Massawah and Massaua), Assab, Cheren, Agordat and Adi Ugrî.

Asmara is situated on a plateau, 7,765 feet above sea level, and has a native population of 15,000, beside about 3,500 Europeans. In the center of the European quarter the Governor's palace is located with its offices and the residence of the Governor, the military quarters, a school, a hospital, an hotel and about 300 edifices for residences and offices, besides a cathedral recently constructed. The native quarter is separated from the European by a large market place. The town is surrounded by fortifications beyond which is the railroad station.

Massawa is an ancient commercial center of Arabic origin which became important during the Middle Ages, and is the chief port of the Colony of Eritrea. It stands on a coral island at the extreme north of the Bay of

Archico



Archico and is connected with the little island of Taulud by a dike  $\frac{1}{2}$  of a mile long, while Taulud is connected with the main land by a dike less than a mile in length. The city of Massawa includes the island of that name with its Arab and European quarters, two churches, a Buddhist temple, a Mosque, a hospital, and a market place; the Island of Taulud with the Governor's palace, the post office, the railroad station, schools and hotel; and the extreme end of the two peninsulas Abd-el-Kader and Grerar. At the latter point there is a fort and the radio station. The city and its suburbs have a population of 12,000, of which about 500 are Europeans.

In 1925 a free port was established at Massawa, and this advantage added to the physical formation of its bay renders it the best port on the Red Sea.

Assab is situated at the extreme northwest of the bay of Assab and is the ancient commercial emporium of Saba. Here the first attempts at colonization were made as early as 1870. It possesses excellent facilities for anchorage, a light house, and its position is of importance in trade with French Somaliland. It is also the outlet for much caravan merchandise proceeding from the interior. It has a population of 3,500 and is the capital of the Commissariat of Dancalia.

The capital of Dankali is Tajura, situated at the base of the Mabila range, a black wall of jagged volcanic peaks of which the highest point is the cone of Djebel Gadda, rising to a height of 6,000 feet. It is a town of white-washed stucco Arab houses, native huts

and

and mosques built along the shore.

#### MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

The construction of railroads in Eritrea was inaugurated in 1888 by a line running from Massawa to Saati. This work was continued until at present a railway line of 75 miles in length connects Massawa with Asmara, from there to Cheren a line of 65 miles, and from Cheren to Agordat a line of 53 miles. From this point in the direction of Tessenei, an extension is in construction. The activity of the railroads, which are under the direction of the colonial administration, is shown by the following table:

Years	Merchandise transported Metric Quintals	Passengers transported
1923-24	606,000	75,355
1924-25	835,000	92,233
1925-26	1,090,589	not given
1926-27	90,000	not given

Aside from the railroads much traffic in Eritrea is carried on by caravans, the merchandise being transported chiefly by camels. The importance of this movement on the caravan routes between Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sultanate del Biro in Danalia, French Somali and Sudan is shown by the following table:

Years.	Number of caravans	Outgoing.	Number of quadrupeds
		Number of men	
1919	1,386	16,638	41,143
1920	1,945	21,739	61,790
Incoming.			
1919	1,169	13,500	30,295
1920	1,631	17,966	50,804



Beside repairing the principal existing caravan routes, some of which have been traversed since before the days of King Solomon, the Government of Eritrea has constructed a net work of waggon roads connecting numerous points, amounting altogether to approximately 275 miles of highways and 650 miles of narrower military roads.

The post offices of Eritrea number 15, the telegraph lines are 416 miles in length with 14 telegraph offices, and there are 1,023 miles of telephone lines. At Massawa, Assab, Asmara and Marsa Fatma Eri wireless telegraph stations have been established which communicate with the radio telegraphic systems of adjacent countries and with Italy. The number of radio messages received and transmitted per year amounts on an average to 40,000.

The port of Massawa on the Red Sea possesses peculiar natural advantages being enclosed by a peninsula and the island of Taulud in such a way that it may be regarded as having two ports, one affording anchorage in calm waters for vessels of great tonnage, and the other being available for smaller craft and coastwise steamers. Large sums have been spent by the government on port works and dredging. The following table gives the movement of navigation in the port of Massawa.

MOVEMENT OF NAVIGATION IN THE PORT OF MASSAWA

Nationality	ARRIVALS						DEPARTURES					
	Steamers						Sailing Vessels					
	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)	No. of vessels	Tonnage (gross)	Cargo (Tons)
							1927					
Italian	193	525,698	49,992	191	524,848	43,143	523	10,864	2,899	589	10,635	1,320
English	34	54,194	15,775	34	54,194	33,210	9	422	226	8	383	12
Arabian	---	---	---	---	---	---	936	27,402	13,254	924	26,379	3,192
Sudanese	---	---	---	---	---	---	28	615	168	28	634	115
French	2	4,406	3,000	2	4,406	6,900	1	34	---	1	34	---
Dutch	1	4,064	610	1	4,064	6	---	---	---	---	---	---
Turkish	1	495	46	1	495	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Total	221	588,857	69,423	229	588,007	83,259	1,597	39,337	16,557	1,550	38,065	4,639

Passengers arriving 16,340

Passengers departing 23,943

	<u>Steamers</u>					<u>1928</u>		<u>Sailing Vessels</u>				
Italian	193	527,472	47,206	190	513,647	44,152	620	12,473	3,857	522	11,713	3,054
English	35	69,353	23,809	34	60,377	35,349	4	116	18	2	102	1
Arabian	---	---	---	---	---	---	695	21,899	6,118	782	22,148	1,736
Dutch	1	4,135	578	1	4,135	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Sudanese	---	---	---	---	---	---	21	473	65	18	165	---
<hr/>												
Total	229	600,960	71,593	225	578,159	79,501	1,340	34,951	10,058	1,324	34,128	4,791

Passengers arriving 9,179

Passengers departing 14,862



## LEADING INDUSTRIES AND TYPES OF GOODS PRODUCED

Among the leading industries of the Colony of Eritrea the fisheries are perhaps the most important, in the annual value of their products and their variety. The pearl fisheries of Massawa and the Dahlak Islands yield about \$50,000 worth of pearls and \$150,000 worth of mother-of-pearl a year. In order to utilize the mother-of-pearl and augment its value, a factory for the manufacture of buttons has been established at Massawa, and its wares are exported to Italy and France. The exportation of fresh fish yielded about \$2,000,000 in 1928. There are also fish canning and preserving factories which are closely linked with the salt industry. Salt obtained from salt lakes and salt works located in Aussa and Boncali, is exported throughout Africa and considerable quantities are shipped to India.

Cattle raising occupies numerous inhabitants, oxen, sheep and goats forming a basis for the production of canned meats, the exportation of hides, and manufacture of leather goods. According to a census of the year 1905, the domestic animals of the colony were as follows:

Camels	46,933
Bovine cattle	295,717
Sheep, goats and kids	736,132
Asses and mules	28,762
Horses	1,027

Some results are obtained from the mineral resources of the Colony. Gold is found in various parts, notably at the mines worked near Asmara, and veins of auriferous quartz exist at Medrizien, Seroa, Dase and Gash as well

as other points. Copper and iron are found in Agametta, and manganese at Serobeti, while lignite also exists. A potash mine on the Ethiopian side of the frontier at Dolol, through an arrangement with the Ethiopian government, is worked by an Italian company and exports large quantities of potash to Italy, France, England and Japan. Some guano is obtained from the Eritrean islands of the Red Sea.

Agricultural industries in Eritrea are of considerable importance. Experiments in the cultivation of coffee, cotton and tobacco have proven successful. Flax cultivation, fomented by the government, has developed a commercial organization resulting in the exportation in 1928 of 96,000 metric quintals of flax. The export of bananas was initiated in 1928, and promises to develop into commercial importance. Coffee is cultivated in the territory of Foghena and Mensa, where about 200,000 plants have yielded some 50,000 metric quintals of a class resembling mocha. It is proposed to extend this cultivation in the regions of Sahel and Assaorta where, according to tradition, vast coffee plantations existed in the past.

A small though growing industry is carried on in incense, the crude product from Migiurtinia being purified and concentrated by a process in operation at Massawa. A flourishing industry developed in vegetable ivory, the nut of the dum palm. The dum palm flourishes in the marshes and along the banks of the rivers, but the species particularly adapted to industrial purposes is found chiefly in the valley of the Barca and the lower Mareb. That  
which



which grows in the lowlands of Danacalia near Assab is worthless for commercial uses. The hard nut of the dum palm is utilized in making buttons and the factories for elaborating this product are at Agordat and Cheren. The dum palm, called by the Arabs, doum, is a useful tree, palm wine called doms being made from the fermented sap, and taffi from which the natives weave mats being made from the fibre.

#### STATISTICS OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

The commerce of the Colony of Eritrea has developed within the past few years, and during the year 1928, the value of the goods imported showed a decrease as compared with 1927, while the value of the exports showed an increase over those of the previous year. The following table gives the value of the imports and exports for the three years, 1926, 1927 and 1928; as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome:

Years	Value of Imports	Value of Exports by sea
1926	\$ 34,358,000	\$ 19,570,400
1927	40,307,200	16,921,200
1928	39,307,200	18,742,200

Cotton textiles, raw, bleached, dyed and printed, and all kinds of cotton yarn are the most important on the list of articles imported, having surpassed \$13,000,000 in value in 1926, and 1927, and dropping to \$12,300,000 in 1928. Coffee from Ethiopia, Yemen and other countries occupies the second place in the value of imports amounting to between \$6,000,000 and \$7,000,000 a year. Wines, spirits and beer imported during the  
years

years under consideration represented a value of over \$1,000,000 each year. Coal and coke imports during 1926, were valued at \$1,248,000; in 1927 at \$1,613,000 and 1928 at \$550,000. About \$1,000,000 of sugar is imported annually. Food stuffs such as flour, rice, canned fruits and vegetables, olive oil and tea are imported in varying quantities, as well as machinery, railroad material, iron, steel and other manufactures of metals.

The item of greatest value among the exports of Eritrea is cow hides, which in 1927, and 1928, reached an annual value of about \$4,000,000, beside which goat skins and other hides amounted to over \$1,000,000 in value a year. Abyssinian coffee is the product of next greatest value in the exports, amounting to \$2,196,000 in 1926, \$2,182,000 in 1927, and \$2,743,000 in 1928; although in 1928, it was exceeded in value by Yemen coffee which rose from \$2,097,000 in 1926, to \$2,593,000 in 1927, and \$3,850,000 in 1928. The export of flax decreased from \$2,356,000 in 1926, to \$1,041,000 in 1927, and \$622,000 in 1928. Fresh, smoked and salted fish exports during 1926, amounted in value to \$312,000, in 1927, to \$463,000, and in 1928, to \$220,000. Salt exports amounted in value in 1926, to \$740,000, in 1927, to \$968,000 and in 1928, to \$825,000. Other articles of export comprise incense, mother-of-pearl, pearls, cotton, gums, potash, and cigarettes. The export of camels amounts to over \$100,000 worth annually.

The value of the exports from Eritrea shows an increase in 1928 of \$1,821,000 over that of 1927, although less than in 1926. These figures refer to the exports by sea, and in addition to this, much merchandise is transported



transported by caravans to Ethiopia and British Sudan. In 1927 merchandise classified as in transit, increased in value over that of 1926, by \$800,000, some of which was transported by caravans, and some by coastwise steamers. The merchandise carried by coastwise steamers is chiefly destined for the coast of Arabia and consists of sugar, Indian rice, cotton goods, petroleum, candles, soap, and gold and silver money. From the coast of Arabia arrive coffee, dates, sesame oil, butter and hides.

Merchandise transported by caravans is a notable factor in the commercial life of the Colony, and its importance is seen by the fact that it absorbs 25 per cent of the entire Ethiopian merchandise exported. The leading lines transported by caravans are cotton goods, liquors, tobacco, cereals, honey, hides, oleaginous seeds, and coffee.

The following table shows the value of the merchandise transported by caravans as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome:

Years	Value of Imports	Value of Exports
1926	\$ 12,956,200	\$ 7,582,000
1927	11,682,600	7,327,000
1928	15,509,400	10,060,000

#### IMPORTS AND COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

The chief source of the imports into the Colony of Eritrea is Italy, followed by Aden and the coast of Arabia. Imports from the United States occupy a relatively unimportant place in the list, and have decreased in value  
from

from \$118,800 worth in 1926, to \$98,000 worth in 1928. The following table gives the value of the imports into the Colony of Eritrea from the leading countries of origin for the years 1926, 1927 and 1928:

Countries of origin	IMPORTS		
	1926	1927	1928
Aden	\$ 3,638,600	4,852,800	2,101,800
Arabian coast	3,707,000	4,267,200	4,067,200
British India	580,400	1,041,400	3,129,200
Egypt	694,600	1,256,200	1,482,000
France	62,200	76,400	85,200
French Somaliland	2,262,000	1,972,000	2,601,000
Germany	60,000	84,600	790,600
Great Britain	586,000	721,400	271,800
Italy	20,410,400	22,752,400	20,862,200
Italian Somaliland	18,600	3,800	2,600
Sudan	511,800	359,000	969,400
United States	118,800	125,600	96,000
All other countries	1,707,600	2,794,400	2,766,400
Total	\$34,358,000	\$40,307,200	\$39,125,400

#### EXPORTS AND COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

The most important market for the exports of the Colony of Eritrea is Italy, followed by the coast of Arabia and Aden, while valuable shipments are destined for France and British India. The United States absorbs comparatively little of the products of the Colony to which, however, the exports have increased from \$66,600 in 1926 to \$213,800 worth in 1928. The following table gives



gives the value of the exports from the Colony of Eritrea to the leading countries of destination during the years 1926, 1927, and 1928, as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome:

Countries of Destination	EXPORTS BY SEA		
	1926	1927	1928
	\$	\$	\$
Aden	1,207,400	1,256,200	1,291,800
Arabian coast	2,019,800	670,800	1,091,200
British India	737,400	931,600	875,000
Egypt	254,400	195,400	218,600
France	898,000	339,800	1,084,600
French Somaliland	46,400	19,600	44,400
Germany	131,200	113,800	50,600
Great Britain	11,400	630,400	325,600
Italy	13,221,800	10,866,600	12,268,600
Italian Somaliland	131,800	207,200	149,400
Sudan	103,200	207,200	129,200
United States	66,600	107,200	213,800
All other countries	741,000	1,375,400	999,600
Total	19,570,400	16,921,200	18,742,200

#### CREDIT TERMS AFFECTING TRADE

The revenue of the Colony of Eritrea is derived from the customs duties, taxation, and a tribute paid by the native tribes of nomads. It is practically self-supporting, and any deficit that may occur is supplemented by grants from Italy.

The Banca d'Italia which has branches at Asmara, Massawa, Cheren and Adi-Caieh has devoted itself to foment the

the growth and vitality of agricultural and industrial prosperity. The Banca Coloniale di Credito also conducts important banking negotiations in the Colony through its bank in Asmara, and has a capital of \$400,000, besides which, also at Asmara, the Banca Cooperativa, Popolare Eritrea, with a capital of \$163,000, serves commercial needs.

Italian is the official languages of the Colony, and may be used in correspondence, while English is also understood commercially. The language of the native population are Arabic, Somali and Ethiopian dialects.

The Italian Lira, equal to about 5 cents, is the unit of official statistics and in use in international commerce, while the native population employs the Maria Theresa dollar as a unit of currency.

The existing customs tariff were established by Royal Decree in 1899, and are variable and preferential.



## PART II. SOMALILAND

### INTRODUCTION

In an informal way the Aden Consulate has jurisdiction over Italian Somaliland, a stretch of country touching the southern shores of the Gulf of Aden. The coast line of Italian Somaliland extends from the border of British Somaliland eastward from Bandar Ziadeh to Cape Guardafui, a stretch of coast on the Gulf of Aden, thence southward along the Indian Ocean to Ras Chiamboni and the border Kenya. Its western or inland borders are formed by British Somaliland, Ethiopia and Kenya. Its extensive coast line is largely rock bound throughout its 1,200 miles of length and from the shore rise a succession of hills fringed with narrow margins of beach. Cape Guardafui which forms what is known as the "Horn of Africa", is a nearly vertical wall of rock rising abruptly from the sea to a height of 900 feet facing the Gulf of Aden on the north and the Indian ocean on the east. Its name has been attributed to the early Portuguese mariners, who on account of the deep waters at its base and the prevalence of winds and ocean currents called it "guardafu", meaning "beware".

The area of Italian Somaliland cannot be given exactly owing to a scarcity of data on some of its confines, but according to statistics published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome for the year 1930, its superficial area comprised 231,660 square miles (600,000 Km<sup>2</sup>). Parts of the country are mountainous, traversed by mountain torrents which are generally dry. In the southern part, around the mouth of the Juba  
river

river a number of small islands separate the coast from the sea in such a manner as to form a natural port at Kismayu, and again at Tula. The climate varies with the altitude, but is mostly hot and dry, while the coast is lashed by the periodic winds of the monsoon.

The indigenous population of Italian Somaliland comprises two principal ethnological elements, the more numerous being the Somali, and the remainder being outcast races. The Somali are not pure Hamites, but show traces of Galla, Afra, Arab, Ethiopian and negro blood, their color varying from Arab hue to black. The majority of them are nomads, devoted to cattle raising, and they lead their herds from place to place in search of pasturage. Comparatively few are settled in fixed places of abode, but, such as are, live in towns near the coast. They are a warlike people, constantly engaged in tribal disputes, and are armed with spears, shields, short swords, and guns when available. The outcast races, which are scattered throughout the country, are workers in iron and leather, collecting resin and gums. The foreign population consisting chiefly of Italians, a few French and some Greeks have settled chiefly along the coast of the Gulf of Aden, while in the southern part of the country known as El-Benadir, there is a settlement of Arabs. According to the census of 1929, as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome, the entire population of Somaliland numbered 1,500,000.

The tropical African fauna is here found in all of its wealth and variety. Lions, leopards, hyenas, elephants, rhinoceros, tigers, panthers, jackals, wild dogs,



dogs, giraffes, antelopes and zebras abound, as well as monkeys, baboons, squirrels, hares, rabbits, lizards, serpents and many other animals. Extensive forests cover much of the country, in some parts forests of cedars are encountered, while bush plants such as umbrella mimosa, acacia, aloes and evergreen lauraceous trees are found mingled with large thorn bushes. These bush plants yield highly fragrant resins and balsams such as frankincense and myrrh.

#### GOVERNMENT

Italian Somaliland acquired fame among the ancients of Egypt, Phoenicia and Rome by its commerce in perfumes and resins, but drifted into oblivion during the Middle Ages. Parts of the country were included in the Zanj empire, which declined at the close of the 15th century. Somaliland was conquered by the Portuguese during the 16th century, by the imans of Muscat during the 17th century, for a time it belonged to the sultans of Zanzibar and later became a dependant of Egypt. After 1882 it was under the British protectorate, and finally in 1885, through a treaty with the Sultan of Zanzibar a commercial convention was concluded with Italy. Subsequently the entire coast of the British Somali protectorate, through agreements with Great Britain, Zanzibar and Ethiopia fell under the Italian sphere of influence. In 1892, the Italian government leased the ports of Brava, Merca, Mogadiscio and Uarsceh from the Sultan of Zanzibar for 50 years, which by a concession were administered by the Filonardi Company, and later by the Benadir Company.

The Sultan, in 1905, ceded his rights to the Benadir ports to Italy for \$720,000, Italy took over the administration and placed the Colony under a Civil Governor. The confines of the Colony were further extended by purchase, agreements, and conquest until in 1928, it was united under the Italian flag and began a period of peaceful colonial policy.

The Colony is divided into 8 Commissariats with its capital at Mogadiscio. Its revenues are derived from the customs which are variable and strongly preferential, the post and telegraph, and various internal taxes and tributes. Schools have been established and a military force is maintained.

#### CHIEF CENTERS OF POPULATION

The wandering tribes which occupy Italian Somali form the greater part of the population and it is chiefly the outcast tribes which form small villages and devote themselves to agriculture. These villages are frequently grouped along water courses so that together they constitute centers of importance. However, some of the Somali have fixed residences, notably in the interior at Dafet, Baideoa, and Bur Acaba, but they remain in them only a part of the year, leaving them for long periods to follow their cattle to pasturage.

The center of population in southern Somali is Mogadiscio, an ancient and flourishing town situated on a rocky promontory between the dunes and the sea. It was founded by the Arabs from the Persian Gulf in the 9th or 10th century, and is now the capital of Italian Somaliland.

The



The antiquity of the town is recorded in its buildings surrounded by a wall with three gateways. Its mosques, minarets, avenues of palms, tombs and ancient lighthouse form a contrast to the modernized palaces of the Governor, Government offices, military commander and other Government edifices. Its population in 1923 numbered 21,000, including the troops. The Italian Colony numbers about 300.

Like Magadiscio, the ancient town of Merca (Meurka or Marka), was founded by the Arabs. It is on a rocky point jutting into the sea, and has a population of about 8,000. In the surrounding country are some large villages, which with the town itself create a diffuse area of population. Merca has a post office, a radio station, is the seat of the Zoological Experimental Station, and has two lighthouses.

Juba is a modern town situated on a hill near the mouth of the Juba river, nearly opposite the village of Gobeun. It is a port which is rendered almost inaccessible for months together by its exposure to moving sand banks. It is, however, the port of departure for a line of vessels, and its population is estimated at 400. Margherita and Gelib are villages in this vicinity.

Lugh is a commercial center in the interior about 240 miles from the mouth of the Juba. It stands on the left bank of the river and is an entrepot for trade with the Boran district. Its importance has increased since the opening of commercial routes leading toward Harrar and the Colony of Kenya.

Alula, with about 1,500 inhabitants, is situated on  
the

the northern shores of the Colony, on the Gulf of Aden, about 346 miles from Aden. It is the seat of the Commissariat of Migiurtine. Sailing vessels are able to enter the port and it is not unimportant as an Arab commercial center, as well as for fishing interests.

#### MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

Internal communication, especially as regards the transportation of merchandise, is largely conducted by camel caravans. These caravans are particularly important in southern Somali where the many wells, and the existence of two rivers render this form of travel practicable. The principal caravan arteries form a net work of roads of about 4,970 miles in extent connecting the centers of population in the interior with Mogadiscio and the coast.

is under construction  
A railroad of which 70 miles is completed connecting Mogadiscio with Abruzzi. The railroad carried in one year 13,943 passengers, and 39,826,432 metric tons of freight. The 932 miles of automobile road which existed in 1923, have been increased to 4,970 miles, greatly facilitating commerce and travel to Kenya and Ethiopia, and interior towns along their route.

There are many miles of telephone lines installed throughout the Colony besides telegraph lines. Its vast radio connections are of strategic as well as commercial value facilitating exchanges with naval and mercantile vessels in eastern waters, and, by means of the radio stations at Mogadiscio, and Massawa in the Colony of Eritrea, 34 stations throughout the world may be heard.

The rocky coast of Italian Somaliland is unfavorable to shipping and no port exists which possesses the natural  
formation

formation necessary to render it of value as a harbor. Even Mogadiscio, the capital, and the head of all of the interests of the Colony is so situated that its approach from the sea is frequently impossible. Hafun or Ras Hafun has two large bays which after the monsoon may be entered by small vessels, and port works are there under construction. Merca also suffers from the lack of a harbor, but the great expense of making it a safe port for vessels, has thus far prevented undertaking the work. Brava is a more promising place for the development of a port, and 15 years ago a bridge was constructed there which is most useful for embarkation. At Chisimale conditions are more favorable for a harbor and its position might be adapted to shelter vessels of any tonnage.

The following table published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome gives the movement of navigation in Italian Somaliland in 1928.



MOVEMENT OF NAVIGATION IN ITALIAN SOMALILAND IN 1928

<u>Nationality</u>	<u>No. of vessels</u>	<u>ARRIVALS</u>			<u>DEPARTURES</u>			
		<u>Tonnage (gross)</u>	<u>Cargo (Tons)</u>	<u>STEAMERS Passengers</u>	<u>No. of vessels</u>	<u>Tonnage (gross)</u>	<u>Cargo (Tons)</u>	<u>Passengers</u>
Italian	326	793,264	31,432	6,858	326	793,264	7,311	6,161
English	41	24,097	3,918	652	41	24,097	494	613
German	3	19,442	4,485	---	3	19,442	---	---
Greek	1	2,313	---	---	1	2,313	20	---
<b>Total</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>839,136</b>	<b>39,835</b>	<b>7,510</b>	<b>371</b>	<b>839,136</b>	<b>7,825</b>	<b>6,774</b>
<u>SAILING VESSELS</u>								
Italian	476	10,750	3,229	959	429	10,272	2,169	1,523
French	4	37	---	---	4	37	---	---
English	33	825	411	28	31	823	27	16
Arab	216	11,381	2,050	963	200	10,679	422	477
<b>Total</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>22,993</b>	<b>5,690</b>	<b>1,950</b>	<b>664</b>	<b>21,811</b>	<b>2,618</b>	<b>2,016</b>

Regarding extensive movement on caravan routes throughout Italian Somaliland complete statistics are not available as much of this class of transportation is not recorded.

The following table, however, gives an idea of its intensity:

Years	Number of Caravans	Number of Camels	Value of merchandise transported
1926	28,339	156,008	\$ 12,257,213
1927	24,792	154,350	10,994,903
1928	20,122	118,983	10,087,487

The gradual decrease in this traffic is attributed to the greater use of automobiles and auto trucks which is facilitated by the improvement of the roads.

#### LEADING INDUSTRIES AND CLASSES OF PRODUCTION

The mineral wealth of Somaliland has not yet been exploited although doubtless of some value. One of the principal products of the country is salt, and important salt works exist in the lagoon of Hordia in the northern part of the peninsula of Hafun. These salt works are in a position to produce 300,000 tons of salt annually and although they have been less than a year in operation, they have shown good results.

Among the largest industrial undertakings in the Colony is a factory at Dusa degli Abruzzi for the extraction of oil from oleaginous seeds and plants, principally cottonseed oil, castor oil and sesame oil. It has a capacity for pressing 600 kilograms of seeds an hour. Other factories manufacture oils and soaps. An important sawmill, with lumber yard, is in operation at Mogadiscio for the elaboration of the woods of the Colony.

The agricultural products of the country form one of  
its

its leading assets. Although much of the land is barren, the fertile parts yield rich crops. Bananas, cotton and sugar cane, castor beans, copra and grains are cultivated.

The area devoted to the cultivation of the banana is now more than double that of last year and the export of bananas rose from 450 metric quintals in 1928, to 2,000 metric quintals in 1929, and 2,500 during the first 6 months of 1930. This increase is largely owing to the improvement in the quality of the banana raised, and to the fact that greater space is now available on ships equipped with refrigeration.

More than 19,000 acres are devoted to the cultivation of cotton, of which large shipments are exported. The crop of third importance in the colony is maize. The terrain devoted to the cultivation of corn increased from 7,413 acres in 1927, to 24,710 acres in 1930. Two crops are garnered annually and amply supply the demands of Somaliland for corn, while later large quantities will be available for export. The Government is making arrangements for the transportation and standardization of this product.

A sugar mill located at Duca degli Abruzzi converts the cane into raw sugar at the rate of 300 metric quintals daily, beside producing molasses and alcohol, and near this factory a modern distillery is situated.

Not far from Mogadiscio argillaceous clay and silica have been found adapted to the production of cement, which it is planned to utilize in constructing ports, bridges, dikes and roads.

Cattle raising is one of the chief occupations of the natives of the country who possess vast herds and carry



on a flourishing trade in hides and skins. Statistics published in 1930 give the number of domestic animals in the Colony as follows:

Bovine animals	1,111,945
Camels	612,503
Sheep	855,263
Goats	1,185,417
Horses	13,138

#### STATISTICS OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Importation into Italian Somaliland exceeds exportation by a large margin. It should be noted, however, that the value of the merchandise exported in 1928, was over \$3,000,000 more than that of the preceding year. The following table gives the value of the imports and the exports by sea for the three most recent years available as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome:

Years	Value of Imports	Value of Exports by sea
1926	25,888,400	5,806,600
1927	31,249,200	5,060,200
1928	26,831,600	8,466,000

Large quantities of merchandise are transported by caravans of camels, and the statistics of this movement refer to the internal commerce of the country and its countries surrounding it on land. The volume of this commerce is shown in the following table for the year 1928:

Caravans arriving at the coast from the interior	Camels	Value of merchandise transported
Number 16,645	Number 105,173	\$7,951,146
Caravans leaving the coast for the interior		
Number 3,477	13,810	2,136,345

The

The most valuable item of importation is textiles of unbleached cotton, of which \$5,843,200 were imported in 1927; and \$3,153,200 in 1928; while the value of printed and various cotton goods amounted in 1927, to \$3,844,400; against \$2,756,600 in 1928. India, Aden and Japan are the leading countries of origin of these imports, followed by Italy. Imports of sugar are second in value, having amounted to \$2,886,200 worth in 1927; and \$2,821,600 in 1928. The value of rice imported increased from \$1,810,200 in 1927, to \$2,431,200 in 1928; and flour from \$975,600 worth in 1927, to \$1,010,800 in 1928. The industrial requirements of Somaliland are reflected in the increased importation of iron, steel and benzine; while the value of petroleum imports fell from \$659,400 worth in 1927 to \$399,200 worth in 1928. The value of coffee imports decreased, while those of tea increased in 1928, as compared with 1927. The imports of bottled wines, sessame oil and manufactured tobacco increased in 1928 over these imports in 1927; while the value of the machinery and lumber imported decreased. The rise in benzine or gasoline imported is attributed to the construction of a new automobile road which connects the more important commercial centers of the country.

The increase in the value of the exports from the country displays growing activity in the development of its resources. Dried skins form the bulk of the export trade, the value of leopard skins exported during 1927, having been \$565,000; and in 1928, \$514,800; of antelope skins \$874,800 in 1927, and \$1,007,000 in 1928; skins of bovine cattle \$553,800 in 1927, and \$1,191,000 in 1928;

and



and skins of goats and kids \$745,600 in 1927, and \$1,233,800 in 1928. The export of bale cotton increased from \$949,000 worth in 1927, to \$1,877,600 in 1928. A notable increase is seen in the value of the incense exported from \$189,200 worth in 1927, to \$502,200 worth in 1928. Raw sugar, which does not appear in the list of exports of the year 1927, was exported in 1928, to the value of \$384,200. The export of canned fish decreased while dried and salted fish increased in 1928. Exports of mother-of-pearl showed a slight increase, while myrrh exports rose from \$23,000 in 1927, to \$78,800 in 1928.

#### VALUE OF IMPORTS AND COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

The chief source of supply for Somaliland is Aden whence about one-third of the imports is drawn, followed by Italy and Kenya Colony. Valuable shipments are also received from India and Egypt. Importations from the United States have decreased during the years 1926, 1927, and 1928, and in the latter year their value was only \$7,200. This is attributed to a shifting of trade in cotton textiles, now supplied to the Colony by Italy in greater quantities. The following table published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome gives the countries of origin of the merchandise imported:



IMPORTS

Countries of Origin	1926 \$	1927 \$	1928 \$
Aden	7,585,200	11,880,800	7,758,400
Arabia	250,600	578,400	908,800
Belgium	949,400	---	---
Czechoslovakia	564,800	984,800	123,000
Egypt	552,600	1,141,200	1,042,400
Eritrea	2,218,600	226,600	475,000
France	78,600	76,600	283,200
Germany	111,000	175,200	389,600
Great Britain	186,200	155,200	61,400
Hungary	334,200	431,400	---
India	1,385,600	2,326,800	656,200
Italy	7,337,200	8,028,200	5,867,200
Jugoslavia	256,800	200,200	1,225,600
Kenya Colony	1,199,600	2,865,000	5,236,600
Spain	5,800	1,600	5,000
Switzerland	8,800	8,000	28,200
United States	271,000	159,800	7,200
Zanzibar	1,366,000	1,455,000	2,159,400
All other countries	1,226,400	554,400	604,400
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,888,400</b>	<b>31,249,200</b>	<b>26,831,600</b>

VALUE OF EXPORTS AND COUNTRIES OF DESTINATION

The increase in the value of the exports from Italian Somaliland is most notable in the value of the merchandise shipped by sea to Italy and Aden, Zanzibar standing third as a country of destination in the year 1928. None of the exports of the Colony were destined for the United States during the three years under consideration. The countries

countries of destination of the merchandise exported by sea during the years 1926, 1927 and 1928, as published by the Colonial Fascist Institute of Rome are shown in the following table:

EXPORTED BY SEA			
Countries of Destination	1926 \$	1927 \$	1928 \$
Aden	948,200	701,600	1,101,800
Arabia	47,000	281,200	585,400
Eritrea	20,600	35,200	104,600
France	104,000	11,200	14,800
Germany	---	4,200	28,600
Great Britain	9,200	32,400	8,800
India	---	4,600	13,600
Italy	3,395,900	3,050,800	5,535,200
Kenya Colony	86,200	147,400	140,000
Zanzibar	1,195,500	791,600	933,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,806,600</b>	<b>5,060,200</b>	<b>8,466,000</b>

#### CONDITIONS AFFECTING TRADE

The Banca d'Italia with branches at Mogadiscio and Chisimaio conducts most of the banking business of the Colony, in which some smaller banking institutions co-operate. Since 1925, the official medium of commerce has been the Italian Lira, equal to about 5 cents, and the value of the Italian "rupia" has been stabilized as equivalent to 8 Liras. The Maria Theresa dollar (thaler) is in use among the native population, a silver coin worth about \$0.71, which has been employed since 1780, as a unit of currency in the Levant.

The official language of the Colony is Italian, and  
correspondence



correspondence with merchants should preferably be in Italian, although English and French are understood by the leading importers and exporters. Arabic is also in use commercially, but the native population speaks Somali and Ethiopian dialects. The metric system is used in weights and measures.

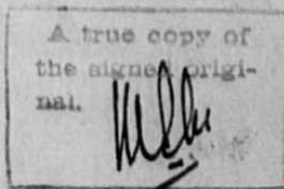
The customs tariff now in force fixes variable and preferential duties. They were established by Royal Decree in August, 1911.

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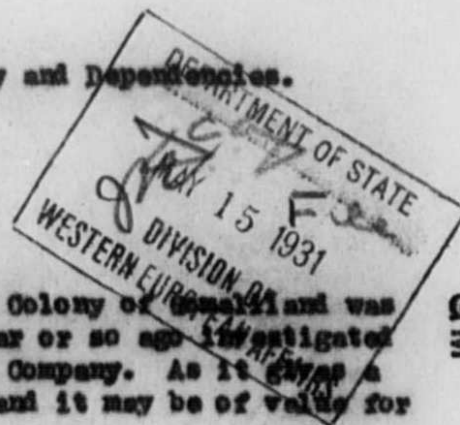
Submitted in quintuplicate.



G-2 Report

ITALY (Political)

Subject : Relationship between Italy and Dependencies.  
Italian Somaliland.



The following information on the Italian Colony of Somaliland was taken from the report of an American who a year or so ago investigated conditions in Somaliland for the United Fruit Company. As it gives a great deal of detailed information on Somaliland it may be of value for our digest.

PART I

Geography :

Italian Somaliland extends from Bandar Ziyada, a point on the Gulf of Aden, intersected by 49° E., to Cape Guardafui and thence to a point 130 miles south west of the Juba river at 42° E. - 1° S.

It is bounded on the North by the Gulf of Aden, South by Kenya Colony, East by the Indian Ocean and West by Kenya Colony, Abyssinia and British Somaliland.

Area 139,430 sq. miles, now given as 447,000 sq. km. since the annexation of the North.

Topography :

The coast line of 1300 miles is practically unbroken. There is no inlet in bay of any extent except at Ras Hafun, where a bold headland partly encloses a sandy bay or rather lagoon, for the water is only four feet deep.

The northern part of the country is mountainous, barren hills of limestone rising sheer up from the sea with mountains immediately behind.

Further south there is a strip of sand desert between the sea and the mountains which gradually widens until at Ras Asud the hills are 150 miles back from the coast.

Three or four sand ridges, about 300' high, run parallel with the coast, the first of these rising from the shore; in some places, these are bare sand, in others there is a scanty growth of low thorn bush and cactus. The ridges, with their valleys, extend inland a distance of fifteen miles, after which the land falls 150' to a plain which rises very gradually to 500'. here there is a plateau which joins up with the hill and mountain country to the West.

There are only two rivers which are perennial, the Webi Shibeli and the Webi Gamma, or Juba; both rise in the mountains of Abyssinia, the Juba being 1800 miles in length.

The statement that the Wadi Ibgal flows continuously is not correct, this river, like every other river and stream in Somaliland, other than the two mentioned above only contains water during the rains and for a few weeks subsequent.

Neither the Webi Shibeli nor the Juba overflow their banks except in the case of very low places along the banks which are converted into swamps during the rains in the Abyssinian mountains which cause these rivers to rise.

Local rains have little effect on these two rivers.



**Geology :**

The Italian territory contains very little mountain country, there is no mining and I have not heard of any minerals of consequence having been discovered.

Coral rock underlies the sand ridges which parallel the coast, inland there is no rock or stone to be seen until after the 500' mark is reached where, in some parts, the soil contains gravel and coarse sand and there are "Burs" (isolated hills of bare ironstone) dotted about, these are two to three miles apart, and rise up sheer from the plain to an elevation of from 200-500 feet, the bases covering an area of forty to sixty acres.

In the north, the mountains are of limestone near the coast and ironstone further inland.

**Vegetation :**

Along the bank of the Webbe Shibeli there are a few "yak" trees of considerable girth but little height. The growth is similar to the English oak and there is evidence that there was at one time a fringe of woodland extending as far as the seepage of the river carried. This, however, has all disappeared due to the fact that there have been villages along the banks for many years.

Apart from this and the lands in the immediate vicinity of the Juba, I did not see a single indigenous tree over thirty feet in height.

Gray colored horn bushes, cactus, aloes, acacia and camel thorn, with an occasional flat topped juniper with some weeds and a scanty growth of grass, all of it burnt a dirty gray brown about comprises the vegetation of Somaliland in every part I visited.

When the rains come the grass is green for a few weeks but most of the year the desert bred cattle, sheep, camels and goats live on the dry grass and browse on the twigs of the thorn bushes.

**Meteorology :****Seasons :**

The natives divide the year into four seasons :

Gisal : The middle of December to the middle of March. Weather very hot and dry. N.E. Monsoon.

Gu : Middle of March to end of May. Hot with rains. About May monsoon changes to S.W.

Hagal : First of June to end of September, cool weather with the light rains, S.W. monsoon heavy.

Dor : October 1st to December 15th. Weather hot, light rains in October and early November.

**Winds :**

The Indian S. W. monsoon blows for practically ten months a year. This, of course, greatly assists in drying up water holes and vegetation.

During July, August and September, it blows with great violence in the northern part of the colony, and I saw when at Hafu sand in great clouds together with small stones driven by the wind in all directions. Caravans can make no headway against it and no vegetation other than thorn bushes could survive.



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As one goes south the force of the monsoon gradually decreases until at Mombasa it is a light breeze and it dies out entirely at Zanzibar.

During my visit to Somaliland it blew steadily night and day much like the Trades of the Caribbean.

All the bananas I saw except those in sheltered localities were badly ribboned.

I saw very few blow-downs, a few trees along a roadside on the Duke's plantation were down but this was a very exposed position.

The director of this farm told me that the highest velocity they had recorded was 37.5 K.P.H. Their wind gauge, however, is in a most extraordinary place - on a post three feet high on the N.E. side of a bungalow distant about 100 feet. I have not discovered any Government record which shows a higher velocity than that stated above. I was told that about once in thirty years there is a typhoon on the coast, but was unable to verify this.

#### Temperature :

During the cool season of July, August and September the mean temperature is by day 82°, night 65°. During the hot season the day temperature is 102°, night 80°, these are temperatures for Joar where the Duke of Abruzzi's plantation is located and are approximately the same as those recorded at Gemale where is situated the second irrigated area.

Temperatures, of course, vary in accordance with the distance one is from the coast and consequent decrease in the force of the monsoon. At Afmahu, south of the Juba, for instance, I recorded a temperature of 98° at 2 p.m.

The temperature never falls sufficiently low to chill bananas.

#### Rainfall :

This year both the "big and little" rains (May and June "big", October "little") have completely failed throughout Southern Somaliland, and the greater part of Kenya; there are prospects of a famine and the boat by which I came to Mombasa was returning from taking a cargo of maize to Mogadishu. I believe the Kenya Government is stopping the exportation of all corn crops.

#### Rainfall :

##### Joar (Villaggio Duca degli Abruzzi)

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Total M/M
1926	-	-	-	-	57	-	78	5	10	76	86	5.5	517.5
1927	-	-	-	-	100	114.5	100.	7	91	111.5	69	21.5	614.5
Days Rain													
1927	-	-	-	-	14	18	12	4	5	11	7	5	76 days

Rainfall 1922 - 250 M/M. in 1925 1095 M/M.

Very variable, seven years average 400 M/M.

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Rise and Fall of Webbe Shibeli at Mahaddai  
(Town 30 Km up river from Jor)

	<u>1st of month</u> metres	<u>end of month</u> metres
Dec. 1927	1.10	1.30
Jan. 1928	1.28	0.64
Feb. "	0.64	0.40
Mar. "	0.40	-
Apr. "	-	-
May "	0.50	4.80
June "	4.70	1.95
July "	1.90	2.58

Jalib on the Juba, 1925, 794" rain, 1926, 965.5, and 1927, 831 M/Ms.

From the figures quoted it will be noted that the rainfall is less than twenty inches per annum and, as this year, it frequently happens that the river falls so low that there is insufficient water to irrigate, this is not of much consequence with seasonal crops such as maize, sim-sim and cotton as these crops are grown and harvested between May and November but it would be fatal to bananas.

It has not been possible to observe the effects of the drought on bananas except in a few very small cultivations, 80 % of the bananas now growing have been planted since the drought last winter, the balance growing in most cases in the vicinity of houses and gardens received such water as was to be had and are no criterion of what would happen to a fair sized plantation when no water was available during the months of intense heat.

PART II

Population :

There are above 1800 Europeans in the Colony. I could only hear of three who were not Italians, apart from a few missionaries.

The native population is estimated to be 650,000.

Native races :

The Somali claim to be descended from the Arabs who fled after the death of Mahommed and the ensuing tribal wars thirteen hundred years ago. They have Arab features and are fairly strict Mussulmans of the Shafai sect, only a few of them are settled in villages, the great majority are nomadic and wander with their flocks and herds over hundreds of miles of country, making short halts where they find water and pasture; now some of the tribes are commencing to settle in villages but still do not work other than tending their camels and cattle.

There are few permanent villages in the interior except those founded and occupied by mullahs and these average seventy miles apart.

The Somalis have not altered much in many years and have not the slightest interest or use for European civilization, they live on camels' milk and meat with millet prepared in different ways.

Their clothes consists of a single piece of cotton cloth about eight yards long wound round the waist with the ends thrown over the shoulder, they wear no head covering, a spear and a broad bladed knife is carried and a wooden pillow when they are on trek.

Women do all the work except the leading of the camels and looking after the cattle.



They carry on the camels a number of bent poles which form the framework of the huts which they cover with hides and skins, the tents are surrounded by a double fence (seriba) of thorn bush. The height and width of this depending on the number of lions and leopards in the district, inside the fences they construct pens for the sheep, goats, camels and donkeys at night, usually fires are kept burning as well.

The Somalis are a warlike race and prior to the advent of the white man were gradually pushing southward and westward and driving the Galla and other tribes before them towards the great lakes. The Somalis, however, being a mountain people, precisely as with the Central American Indians, are afraid of the unhealthy lowlands and so, for many years, the vicinity of the great rivers had been a refuge for the negro tribes whom the Somali had defeated, thus it came about that a distinct race, known as the Webi Shibeli negroes, was evolved, but eventually the Somalis pushed eastwards and when the Italians first took over the country these negroes were the slaves of the Somali.

There is no social system in Somaliland but government by tribes, clans and families; there is no cohesion and no paramount native chief.

On the Juba river the Goshu tribe lives, a purely negro race, of better physique than the Somali but not nearly as intelligent.

There are, in addition, various lesser tribes in Jubaland with a sprinkling of Masai, etc.

The population of the coast towns consists of samples of half the races of Africa and the East. Arabs predominate but there are many British Indians, etc. etc.

These people live principally on fish and rice with maize boiled and prepared in various manners, throughout Somaliland meat is the principal article of diet.

#### Administration :

Various heads of tribes or families have been given a limited amount of authority, acting under the instructions of their local residents.

#### Labor :

There is a great shortage of labor for agricultural work, a very small percentage of the population will do anything except look after their stock and the question of indentured Chinese labor is under consideration.

The labor supply is very much better on the Ghebeli than in the vicinity of the Juba, but in the case of the former except on the Duke's farm, the area planted in cotton is restricted owing to the difficulty of getting the crop picked.

Ex-slaves under Somali foremen do good work but much of the labor is gathered in by soldiers with loaded rifles, they go out to the villages or wherever they can find men, herd them in and put them to work for three months, each farm has a small squad of soldiers for the purpose of gathering and guarding labor.

Unless, of course, the man happens to be one of those Somalis who in recent years have settled down in a village, this task of civilization suffices and at the first opportunity he leaves for the interior and is caught again.

Many schemes have been tried to create a demand for goods amongst the natives which would necessitate their working to obtain the purchase price; so far, however, no one has discovered anything the Somali wants which the European can supply. They even went to the extent of trying to get them to drink wine, but however lax he may be in the observances of his creed, it is, in this instance, quite impossible to get a Mussulman to transgress.



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The various missions operating in the country are making no headway in either civilizing the people or getting them to accept their various brands of religion, and the waifs and strays they pick up and educate promptly revert to their native religion and mode of life as soon as they are big enough to run away.

The Duke of Abruzzi has a colonization scheme working with very fair success, but this is almost entirely negro labor.

Wages are higher than is usual in East Africa, the daily wages paid are : men, 4 lire; women, 3, and boys 2 lire. Work is usually given out by the task, which task takes about ten hours to perform.

#### Housing :

Water governs the location of villages and they are invariably found near wells.

The villages are surrounded by an irregular wall some eight or ten feet high constructed of interlaced sticks plastered with mud, the houses, built in a similar manner, are circular, about ten feet in diameter and roofed with grass or reeds. Cooking is done in the hut which has no window and only a very small door opening into an enclosed yard with a high fence where sheep and goats are kept.

In the larger villages there is no communal fence but each little group of three or four huts has its own. There are no large council huts and the huts of the chiefs differ but little from the rest, a few I noticed were square and somewhat larger. Some villages have a small mosque.

The coastal towns also date back thirteen hundred years to the time of the disturbances in Arabia, following the death of the prophet, but there is evidence that they were settled long before that time. They consist of a small walled Arab town in the vicinity of which has sprung up a number of native huts. The town consists of flat topped stone built houses separated by a maze of narrow passages and courtyards. The walls are very thick and the doors, studded with bronze spikes and beautifully carved, immensely strong.

Corners of these towns have been taken over by the Government and form the European quarter.

The population is approximately : Mogadishu 16,000, Merka 8,000, Brava 6,000, Kismayu 7,000. The first named contains a few Government buildings and private houses of modern construction.

#### Food and Cost of Living :

The nomadic Somali lives entirely on milk and meat, the Webbi negroes on meat, river fish, and baked or boiled corn or millet. Those living on the coast eat rice and fish principally.

They do not cultivate yams and cassava although they sometimes have a patch of plantains which they irrigate with what I believe is the customary arrangement of the East of a skin bucket on the end of a long pole balanced on a forked stick, stones are tied on the other end of the pole as a counter-balance to the water which is delivered into a trough of wood on the river bank.

Living is cheap for the native even when he has to buy all his food; meat costs him only about 1d. per lb., eggs can be bought 20 for 5d.

Living, for the Italians, is, although somewhat higher than in Italy, distinctly cheap. In Mogadishu beef is 5 l per lb., mutton the same, fish less, vegetables are rather scarce and dear but imported foodstuffs are reasonable. House rent is high, 5 2 per week for a single large room is no uncommon price; this is due to there being no timber in the country and the high freight rates on building materials, also much cargo

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is damaged and lost in the surf boats so that what arrives carries the loss on the damaged goods. (Just why they import cement in bags instead of drums I can not say).

Building on the coast is done with blocks of coral rock sawn out like Bath stone.

### PART III

#### Government :

##### Administration :

When Conte de Vecchi de Val Cimmon took over the Governorship of the colony about five years ago, he inaugurated a Fascist regime; he was relieved by Count de Corni who is carrying on the same form of government. It is, to a large extent, martial law. There is no council and no representing of the colonists, the Governor gives his orders and the army sees they are carried out.

The Governor is responsible only to Mussolini who submits for the Governor's approval the names of all who wish to go to the colony from Italy whether in the Government service or as private individuals.

The country is divided into seven administrative districts, each under a commissioner, in addition there are forty-seven residents who are the heads of the civil administration in their sub-districts.

Practically all the Administrators and Residents are army officers and the country is linked up with good roads and a large number of radio stations, while at many strategic points they have a force of native troops under Italian officers and N.C.Os, equipped with armored cars and machine guns.

At Mogadishu they have twelve planes and there are a number of small landing fields scattered about the country, at the capital is kept a number of motor trucks for the quick transportation of troops.

There is a system of interior passports for the natives who have to obtain a visa to travel from one district to the other, and any native out after dark is compelled to carry a lantern. These regulations do not apply to Arabs or Indians.

On the whole the treatment of the natives appears to be fair, as long as they behave, but the Italians are utterly ruthless in case of disturbance or uprising, any natives has the right to a personal interview with the Governor and complaints, such as non-payment of wages, are promptly investigated.

##### Laws and Concessions :

The laws and their administration are in accordance with the Fascist regime in Italy, modified to meet local conditions with respect to the natives.

Concessions would not be granted except to Italian subjects. On the Juba there is a Greek with a small farm of 100 acres, he has been in the country for ten years, a few weeks ago he applied to the Government for an additional 100 acres and was told he could not have it unless he became an Italian citizen.

All land is the property of the Government and no freehold is granted, the planters hold their land on a 99 years lease at an annual rental of fifty lire per hectare.

##### Hospital Sanitation and Vital Statistics :



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There is a good and well equipped military hospital at Mogadishu with Italian doctors and nurses, private patients are accepted at an inclusive charge of Lire 40 per day.

The Government maintains small hospitals or dispensaries in all the larger towns and military posts.

Vaccination is compulsory and sanitation receives close attention, as a rule the towns and villages are very clean.

Generally speaking, I should say the country was quite healthy, there is no sleeping sickness anywhere and little or no malaria on the coast, only in the vicinity of the rivers is it bad and then principally in the irrigated districts.

The days are hot but the nights almost always cool and I found it necessary to wear a thick sweater and a raincoat while motoring at night, this right on the equator.

#### PART IV

##### Commercial :

##### Business :

The principal exports are : cotton, hides, skins, vegetable oils, gum, ivory and ostrich feathers.

##### Value in Lire

	( 1925	85,195,728	
Exports :	( 1926	158,475,216	
	( 1927	181,000,000	(approximate, but was expected to exceed this).

The bulk of the trading is done by Arabs and Indians with some few Italians in Mogadishu, transportation by cars and lorries is in the hands of the Arabs.

The only bank of the colony is the Banca d'Italia, at Mogadishu, with a branch at Kismayu.

The most important trading firm is the Compagnia Italiana dell'Est Africa.

The caravans from the interior transact most of their business with the Arabs and Indians and it would appear to be a difficult business for the European to get into and make anything out of it. The caravans from the interior bring gum-arabic, ivory and ostrich feathers.

##### Mining and timber :

So far, no minerals have been found and there is no timber in the country which could be exploited commercially.

##### Wireless cables :

##### Telephone :

At Argoi 30 kilometres west of Mogadishu there is a beam radio station in communication with Rome, this communicates with some ten smaller stations, through the country.

There is telegraphic communication along the railway from Mogadishu to Joar, and in connection with some of the principal towns and telephonic communication in Mogadishu.

There is no cable.



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## Railways :

A Government railway runs from Mogadishu to Joar, a distance of 124 kilometers, this is now being extended to the Abyssinian frontier. There is little business done as the line was built primarily for strategic reasons and secondarily to serve the Duke of Abruzzi's plantation, at present they run one train per week and the first-class fare is 75 lire for the 124 kilometers or two and one half times what the Arab lorries charge.

The gauge is one metre with 40 lb. rails and steel ties, the rolling stock consists of some 40 box cars with a few flat cars, etc., three Porter engines of about 20 tons and two of Italian make and somewhat heavier, the right-of-way is ballasted with coral rock.

They plan to complete the extension to the Abyssinian border within two years, and are working on it now.

A 60 c/m Decauville track was commenced some time ago from Merka to run to Genale, and serve the cotton plantations in the district. This has apparently been abandoned and there is talk of running a branch line from Afgoi to Genale, a distance of about 70 kilometres. This could be done very cheaply. The land is level. The whole way would require no bridges, no cuts and no fills, and only the slightest grade would be needed, say 10". This will no doubt be done within the next two years.

## Roads :

There are five thousand kilometers of earth roads in the colony, which are quite good, but in time of rain they, however, become impassable for either cars or camels.

From Mogadishu to Afgoi and from Merka to Genale, across the ridges of loose sand, they have constructed rock roads, coral rock, all that is available is used, and it is without doubt the poorest road material known, in a matter of weeks it crumbles to powder and works into the loose sand beneath, leaving a surface which is a nightmare to drive over.

## Shipping Harbors, etc.

## Tonnage entered

1925	19,432 tons
1927	50,000 "

The monthly mail service from Italy of the Compagnia Italiana Transatlantica is the only regular service with Europe direct. The Italian Compagnia Triestina maintains a service once monthly from Italy via Red Sea Ports to Mogadishu, the ships returning via the Cape and West Coast.

There is a coastal service run by the Compagnia Transatlantica twice a month from Zanzibar to Massawa in Eritrea and calling at all Somali-land ports.

A 500 ton steamer, operated by the Cowassee Dinshaw Co., a Parsee firm of Aden, makes an occasional trip on the coast, also a small ship of the British India (P. & O.) line. These services are dependent on cargo offerings.

There is no harbor between Aden and Mombasa and the heavy S. W. monsoon, the strong and constantly shifting currents and poor coast lights renders navigation distinctly dangerous.

All cargo is handled by surf boats, stevedoring is expensive and it is safe to say that no ship ever discharges during a heavy wind without some accident to the cargo, it being either soaked with water or lost overboard.

The "Africa Pilot" speaking of Mogadishu states that "landing can

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only be effected about once in four days during the S. W. monsoon." This is quite correct and quite frequently the ships lie off the reef for six days and can not discharge.

On the ship by which I came there arrived an engineer, the head of a dock construction company, to prepare estimates for harbor works at Mogadishu. The Italian government has granted the sum of Lire 1,200,000 for this work. I was told that after he had made a preliminary survey he said he did not think he would touch it for he doubted whether it was feasible at all, and certainly could not be done for the sum allocated.

The master of a ship who knows the place well told me he felt certain it was impossible.

There is a small headland of rock jutting out, perhaps 90 yards, and from this and running in a northerly direction there is another small headland about 40 yards long. This forms a tiny bay only partly protected from the sea and is all they have as a base to work from.

The bottom is sand to some depth and offshore a coral reef runs at a distance of about 150 yards.

It is a pretty hopeless scheme but the Italians expect to see it finished in two and a half years.

At Kismayu is a bay partly enclosed by coral reefs and here there would be a better prospect of making a harbor and dock, but in this part of the country there is, at present, nothing to justify it and it would necessitate the construction of some 400 kilometers of railway and the bridging of the Juba river in order to serve the present cultivations.

No banana business can possibly be built up until such time as they have some port at which they can load, irrespective of tide and wind.

Neap tides are 6', springs 10'.

#### PART V

#### Agriculture :

##### General :

The native crops are maize, millet and sim-sim (*sesamum indicum*). There is no reliable record of the production per acre but in view of the lack of rain and primitive methods it must be very low.

Following is the record of the crop production of last year, 1927:

<u>White</u>	<u>Quintals</u>
Cotton .....	12,000
Sugar .....	250,000
Maize .....	20,000
Dura (a variety of millet) .....	7,500
Sesamo (Sim-sim) .....	2,800
Kapok .....	65
 <u>Native</u>	
Maize .....	100,000
Sesamo .....	16,000
Dura .....	850,000
Cotton .....	250

I quote the above figures from a report made by the Director of Agriculture, but I rather question the figures given for sugar which seem high considering the small area cultivated.



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## Native methods :

The soil for some four or five inches is reduced to a powdery mulch by the end of the dry season in late May, over this the natives work with a home-made hoe not unlike an infantryman's entrenching tool. They work bent double and it has been found impossible to introduce long handled tools even in the Italian plantations, when they have chopped over the surface and cut down the few weeds they proceed with a board on the end of a pole to rake the loose earth into ridges, eventually leaving the field in a series of squares about 8' x 6', surrounded by a ridge of earth a few inches high, the idea being to catch the rain and concentrate it where the seed is planted in this tray or depression, no ploughing is done and there is, of course, no attempt at selection of seed or rotations of crops.

## European Cultivations:

At Afgoi, thirty kilometers by road from Mogadishu, an attempt is being made to establish a colony of Italians. These people are laborers or small farmers.

The man who owns the land receives 50% of the crops grown while the Government guarantees him against loss, the land is now being ploughed, irrigation is by a 16" centrifugal pump, ploughing is done with "Fordson" tractors, there are some twenty people on this plantation at present.

There is a small dispensary and a railway station on the place, also two native villages are close by, concrete houses are now being built.

Most of the work is done by the Italians and little labor is employed.

Somaliland is not by any means a white man's country and whether even Italian laborers can stand farm work is doubtful, at all events two have died, one of sunstroke and another of malaria and several have returned to Italy.

At Gessale, which is 125 kilometers from Mogadishu and thirty from Merka, is the largest European settlement in Somaliland. Here, some ten years ago, the Government established an experimental station and some four years ago a dam was constructed.

In this area there are now 87 Italians settled, the Government has built all the main and secondary canals and roads through the district.

The farms vary considerably in size, from 400-1200 acres.

Cotton is the principal crop but maize and sim-sim (sesame) are also grown. The yield per acre is quite good but this, of course, depends to a large extent on the ability of the farmer; it is quite obvious that many of them have only a very limited knowledge of planting. I saw one large area flooded after the majority of the holes were open.

The planters are of all types and classes, some retired army and navy officers, others mechanics, shop-keepers and clerks. The majority are quite young, and from what I saw a rather irresponsible crowd. The President of the Cotton Growers Association is only twenty-four years old.

Only about seven of them possess sufficient capital to carry on properly and, of these, some have gins and clean the cotton for the rest.

They burn all the cotton seed, seventeen hundred tons were burnt last year, just to get it out of the way (cotton seed fetches about £ 8 per ton in Liverpool). Nowhere else in the world would one find such a valuable feed or fertilizer burnt.

The Government vainly endeavors to collect the fifty lire per hectare rent. Three years ago fifteen paid rent, in 1926 two paid, in 1927 nobody paid.

All the time deputations of natives wait on the Governor with complaints of non-payment of wages, but the planters have no money, the



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Government has none for agricultural loans and the Banca d'Italia, after having been badly struck a few times closed down; the planters not owning the land, have no security to offer.

Out of the situation the Arabs and Indians are growing rich. They buy the crop at ten lire per kilo (the full price being fifteen) and advance sufficient money for the payment of wages, etc.

Fordson tractors are used for ploughing and the cotton is shipped from Merka, being transported across the sand hills by camels.

The water supply sometimes fails, even during the short cotton season, May-November.

The further from the river the farm is situated the poorer the land, and, of course, the greater liability of the water-supply failing.

A central gin and cotton store of concrete is now being constructed on the edge of the irrigated area about fifteen kilometers from Merka, this is being done by the Government.

The third place where planting is done on a large scale is at Jear, or, as it is now called, Villaggio Duca degli Abruzzi.

The farm was originally started by the Duke to demonstrate what could be done in the colony. Later it was turned into a company, the Società Agricola Italo Somala, localised known as the "Sais".

I am told the capital expenditure has been a million and a half sterling and for the past two years a dividend has been paid.

The farm is 134 kilometers by road from Mogadishu and 124 by the railway. It is 66 kilometers distant from the coast and the altitude is 340 feet. It is the only European plantation north of Mogadishu.

They now have 12,350 acres in hand, not including native villages and their allotments of land. There are no uncultivated areas, no swamps and no waste land.

Further areas are now being cleared and some six or seven kilometers up the river is a large cattle ranch where they breed work oxen, beef animals, etc.

The organization is similar to that of our Central American Divisions and the equipment very complete.

#### Police Barracks :

All the above are of brick and reinforced concrete construction.

The plantation is divided into six farms each with a white manager and two white assistants, in addition there are various heads of departments such as the men in charge of the sugar factory, oil plant, etc.

The farms are complete units with their bungalows for white men, stables and cattle sheds, yard for drying and sorting cotton, warehouse, 100' x 40', and native village.

The personnel consists of some eighty Italians and about 6000 natives. There are 1800 native families living on the estate and each family has a plot of ground on which to grow food and cotton, wages are slightly less than at Genale, a certain amount of out-side labor is required during such times as the cotton picking season.

As a whole, I think the labor compares favorably with that in Central America, most of the work is done by task but cotton picking and jobs of that nature are piece work. From what I could gather the laborers seemed contented but discipline is very strict and all rules are rigidly enforced.

There are 52 kilometers of 60 cm. track and 85 miles of excellent roads. The principal canals run a distance of over 80 kilometers and land is irrigated eleven kilometers from the river.

Fiat tractors and trucks are used extensively and but little cultivation is now done with oxen.

Four ton Deutz petrol locomotives are used on the plantation railway.

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At the commencement the materials were taken from Afgoi by river but with the advent of the railway all the river equipment except one launch has been scrapped.

The soil is very similar to that in the Gemale district, a dark clay loam fairly friable for the first 18", the subsoil is rather hard and inclined to pack, there is a great depth of soil. I have seen pits eight and ten feet deep with no appreciable difference between the soil, at a depth of 2½' down to 8', test holes have been dug to a depth of ten meters and the same soil found, only, of course, denser and heavier.

The principal crops grown are sugar, cotton, maize, sim-sim, castor bean and sunflower.

When I was on the plantation they were picking a heavy crop of excellent cotton from some 3400 acres, there are about 4000 acres under cane, the balance under the other crops mentioned above with some large areas of soy beans and other nitrogenous crops for ploughing under.

A regular rotation is practised and the land is in excellent condition.

Much experimental work is being done and some three hundred acres are set aside for this purpose, amongst other things I saw, either in the propagating sheds or planted out, were citrus fruits, mangoes, pine-apples, sour-sop, sugar apple, guavas, paw-paw, avocado pears, etc., also coconuts, kapok, coffee, cocoa, tea, and innumerable other trees and plants, of course many of these are grown purely as a matter of interest and could not be planted commercially. Coconuts grown and look well, for instance, but the nuts are very poor indeed; however, a lot of practical work is done in connection with cotton and maize, trying out various fertilizers and methods of cultivation, etc.

One hundred and fifty acres are now in bananas and a lot of experimental work is being carried out. There are some twelve varieties now growing in the experiment fields under different conditions of fertilization, cultivation, etc.

These experimental plots have been planted recently and it was difficult to distinguish the varieties, but in different parts of the plantation I saw Cavendish, Cavle Lady, finger apple, Juba and two other native varieties and three kinds of plantain. The Cavendish looked by far the best.

In one experimental plot I believe Gros Michel were growing, but they were very small, only about four feet high. I did not wish to exhibit a too intense interest in bananas and so did not enquire about them.

Scassalati told me that they were going to plant on a large scale, and, as noted in the foregoing, they are building a packing shed. So far they have made no shipments.

They are quite evidently much interested in the business, and I noticed two books on banana cultivation in the Director's office.

I have no doubt that eventually they will settle on the Cavendish which is undoubtedly best adapted to their conditions; very careful records are being kept of all experiments.

The roads and fields are lined with kapok, casuarina and other trees in double rows and after two or three more years growth these will greatly minimise the danger of blow-downs.

With the tramway all through the plantation, the railway to Mogadishu, and as they hope, after two and a half years, a harbor, they will, as far as transportation goes, be well equipped as there is ample capital and influence to secure the ships.

The land can produce bananas and, with cultivation and fertilization, for many years, the fruit will not be of good quality, but no doubt will be readily saleable at a remunerative price in a country where there is no competition.

The only catch that I can see in it is that frequently the water fails during February, March and April; in the case of the crops grown at present



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this does not greatly matter as they plant in May and harvest is over by the end of November. It does, however, harm the sugar cane and any perennial or retuned crop, and two months without water during the period of intense heat would be disastrous with bananas.

A short time ago the Duke left and went to Jibuty in French Somaliland, from there he is making a three or four months trip through Abyssinia "to explore the sources of the Webi Shibeli". As, however, this was done forty-one years ago by our Government and is thoroughly surveyed and mapped, I made some enquiries, but only found out that he is accompanied by a soil chemist, an engineer and a geologist. From this I feel certain that H.R.H. has gone to look for a dam site on the Abyssinian border so that the water supply can be assured and, possibly, increased.

It is at "Saia" that the Somaliland banana business will be started, both the Duke and his manager, Scassaletti are clever and energetic men, and if by any means the provision of an adequate water supply and a harbor is possible they will put it through. Eventually their lead will be followed by the irresponsible youths of Gemale.

There is little to write about respecting cultivations on the Juba river. The history of planting on this river is a long record of failures and considerable sums of money have been lost.

The soil, as a whole, is inferior to that along the Webi Shobeli while they have the same difficulty with low water, the river does not go quite dry but on the other hand it does not flood and annually inundates a large area as is stated in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica".

Capt. Fortunati, the resident at Jelib, showed me a photograph, taken early this year, of natives crossing the river near Jelib, and in mid-stream the water came to their knees.

At the present time the river is rising and falling in the most extraordinary manner; while I was at Jelib it fell 1.24 metres in twenty-four hours. The reason is, I believe, that there is a ten foot rise and fall of the tide at the river mouth, and a large volume of river water which is backed up by the sea is released at low tide. When the river is low the sea water comes up nearly thirty kilometers - nearly to Yante.

Local rains do not affect the river and it does not overflow its banks, in many places where there is a fringe of woodland along the margin I found 6" - 8" of dried leaves, the bottom two inches rotten and decayed, clear proof of the absence of floods, I also looked carefully for watermarks in the trees, but found none, nor any sign of silt.

The river occasionally runs into the "Desheeks" which are depressions in the land, some of considerable area, here the water lies until evaporated, little or nothing grows in these "desheeks", the deposit left by the river caking and becoming like a coating of cement.

On the whole river there are only two Europeans planting; one, a Greek of peasant origin, has a place of just under one hundred acres, this spot is quite the best soil I saw but it is surrounded by sandhills and there is no good land in the vicinity, he grows maize and cotton and makes a fair living.

Count Enrico Frankenstein, a Pole who is a naturalized Italian citizen, has been planting since early in 1910 near Margherita; the Count is a man of considerable private means and until last year his annual loss on the plantation is stated to have been between two and four thousand pounds, last year he made a small profit but this year there will be a big loss. I met him several times and he is interesting but not very practical, I heard he had applied to the Governor for permission to sell the place, it is freehold, the last time I saw him he had malaria badly and was very discouraged and tired of it.

There are several thousand acres in the estate and it is well equipped, irrigation is by three eight inch centrifugal pumps driven by portable

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steam engines burning wood.

Not more than four hundred acres are under cultivation now and the three other white men he employs appear to spend their time in their houses. Frankenstein spends half his time in Rome and Paris.

This place will probably close down next year.

The corn and cotton grown is not nearly as good as that at Jear and the land probably requires resting, a few bananas are being planted, as at Jear the Cavendish look best.

The river is useless for transportation six months out of the twelve and not less than a hundred miles of railway would be required, a breakwater and dock would have to be constructed at Kiamayu, owing to sand banks no harbor could be made at the mouth of the river, and, thirdly, a big dam would have to be constructed to conserve water for the dry season, this, coupled with the fact that there is no banana land on the river, at all events, within 150 miles of the coast completely eliminates this district as a banana producing area.

Labor is supplied by the Goshu negroes who have villages along the banks where they plant patches of bananas for own use, at present I doubt whether two hundred stems per month are available for export, and this of wretched quality native varieties.

There is one Englishman on the river who is hanging on to a defunct cotton plantation and trying to collect some money from the company, meantime he supports himself by selling bits of the machinery, tin roofs, etc. This is the plantation mentioned on Page 46 of Dracopoli's book on Juba land, which I am returning.

On this plantation Sisal was tried but proved a failure. The river Juba varies little in width at any part, it would average 60 yards, until close to the mouth and, when in flood the depth is about 20', the current is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  m.p.h.

#### Soils :

There is no banana soil on either of these rivers and no soil remotely resembling the alluvial river deposits of Central America.

As noted in the foregoing there is a littoral belt of sandy soil which takes the form of ridges parallel with the coast, some of these ridges are shifting dunes of loose sand, others carry a scanty growth of thorn bush, in some parts where this soil has hardened and set the growth of thorn bush becomes heavier and some grass grows, furnishing fair grazing during the rains.

Under this sandy littoral formation is coral rock at varying depths, or a compacted decomposed coral limestone formation.

Proceeding from the coast inland one comes to the alluvial plain which has been formed by the two rivers, here there are two types of soil with, of course, variations. The first and elder is the red soil, a lateritic formation very dense in texture, intensely hard in the dry season and not adapted to agriculture, it crops up in areas all over the plain and is probably a very old formation on which has been deposited the second type of soil, the black, or "Arre Medou".

The red clay type soil is used for brickmaking and on most farms, both the Duke's and the farms at Gemale, there are outcrops where bricks are made.

The black soil varies somewhat in color, the best of it is within five miles of the river. It is a clay loam inclined to pack and become hard, in some parts there is a little coarse sand mixed with it. There is a considerable depth of this class of soil and it is stated that a chemical analysis gives much the same results at all depths.

The soil is usually very hard at a depth of two feet but under cultivation and irrigation is more friable.

On the farm at Jear the lime content is stated to be 2.5%.



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This is not a banana soil, although it will grow the fruit, and it is hardly possible to classify it in terms of years as irrigation, cultivation, green manuring and other fertilization is required and will be used.

I should like to add that the term "black soil" is applied to all soils other than the red, and some, or most, of the soils are brown colored loams.

Crops : Bananas and Plantains : The Horse Plantain is the one most commonly grown.

Rubber is being experimented with at Gemale and Joar.

Pineapples as above, but are not successful.

Oil Palm also being tried out but soil appears too heavy.

Cocconuts owing to heavy soil have proved a failure, can be grown as ornamental trees.

Cotton. Egyptian type cotton is grown. It takes five months to grow. In the Gemale district there are 36,000 acres in cotton, at Joar about 3,000 native cultivations and those on the Juba, amounting to about another 3,000 acres. The yield is stated to be 480 lbs. cleaned cotton per acre on the irrigated lands.

cotton

Sisal. This has been tried by two companies on the Juba but proved a failure, the deep strong loam is totally unsuited to this crop.

Kapok (Silk-cotton tree). The planting of this has been much boomed by the Director of the Government Experiment Station at Gemale, who did not strike me as a very efficient person. He was unable to say what yield per acre might be expected. The Director of the Duke's farm gives it as one kilo in the third year after the tree is set out. Kapok has been grown for ten years at Gemale and the trees grow to a great size. They should be planted not less than 60' x 60'. The fibre fetches twentyfive lire per kilo in Italy.

Rice is not grown. It can not compete with that imported from the East.

Maise is grown extensively and forms part of the totation in the cotton farms; except at Joar ("Sais") no attention is paid to the seed and the production per acre is small, is a 90 day crop.

Caster Bean. Several hundred acres of this is grown at Joar each year and the oil exported to Italy. It is grown nowhere else in the country.

Cassava. I saw only one small field of this, on the Juba.

Sesame (native Sim-Sim), Sesamum Indicum, is grown largely both by natives and Europeans. The natives use the oil for cooking. A quantity is sent to Italy where the oil is used to adulterate olive-oil. The yield is uncertain but

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would appear to be about 15 bushels per acre, when grown under irrigation.

Miscellaneous.

The paw-paw is the only fruit grown to any extent, except at Jor and the Government station at Gemale where most of the tropical fruits can be seen, the indications are that none of them could be grown commercially. In the irrigated gardens of the farms most of the European vegetables are grown as carrots, turnips, beets and even lettuce.

"Dura", a red-seeded variety of millet is grown by the natives and made into bread.

Sugar is only grown commercially in the "Gais" plantation at Jor. There are a few very small patches of it grown by natives on the river banks.

Cattle, etc.

Stock raising is the principal industry of Italian Somaliland and approximately 85% of the population is engaged in it.

This is a purely native business, the only part the European takes in it is the purchase and export of hides. One of the many European failures on the Juba river is commemorated by the ruins of a large factory near Margherita where some Italians tried to run a packing plant, at the start they bought their cattle at from thirty to forty shillings per head but the supply could not be contracted for and very soon the Somali was charging five and six pounds and the factory closed.

The cattle are mostly of a Zebu strain, although some herds from the interior are of purely native stock, small and weedy with immense horns.

There is no market for the meat other than the local one and a few head shipped now and again to Zanzibar.

The whole country swarms with cattle, camels, which by the way are never ridden, goats and black headed Indian sheep.

There are numbers of donkeys also but no horses or mules, except those imported by the Italians.

There are son<sup>o</sup>tsetse belts in the Juba river but none apparently in the Webi Shebali.

The desert-bred cattle are only watered three times a week and sometimes only twice, one finds them grazing in the dried-up grass thirty miles from any water and they appear to be in fairly good conditions, the meat, however, is wretched stuff.

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Areas : Examined.

Following are notes on some of the localities visited :

Hafun (Miliartem). Northern Somaliland.

A horrible place, all sand and bare rock, very hot indeed. Sand storms all over the place, it is like this throughout July, August and September. No vegetation whatever near the coast and inland, three or four miles, only a few low thorn-bushes half buried in drifting sand.

There is a small army post here and a company employing 550 men is engaged in making salt (which must be full of sand) on a large scale.

There is no harbor and there are strong currents which are dangerous as they are constantly shifting.



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Mogadishu to Waale via Afgoi.

For the first fifteen miles a coral rock with a very bad surface leads across sand ridges, there is a very sparse growth of thorn-bush and some cactus. The road then drops down to the plain through which the river runs.

At Afgoi is the plantation on which a colonisation scheme is being worked out with Italians (I have referred to this in another part of this report).

The river at Afgoi is 50 yards wide, the water is 8' from the top of the banks and the current 3 m.p.h. depth at railway bridge 14'.

I noticed a clump of Lady Finger bananas in the irrigated garden of the Radio Station, the leaves of these bananas were badly ribboned by the wind.

Close to the river there were cracks in the soil 2" wide and two feet deep.

On the West side of the river there are numerous native fields prepared in squares 6' x 8" with a ridge of soil around them. There is nothing growing now as the rains have failed and the natives are waiting for the October and November rains to plant their maize, sesame and millet. (These later rains have also failed).

The soil at Afgoi is a dark brown clay loam, very hard packed at a depth of 2½' but fairly friable for the first 18", it is very dry and at a distance of 150 yards from the river and a depth of four feet is absolutely dry, bricks are being made near the village.

Irrigation, by steam pump, is confined to the Italian colony plantation.

West of the river the soil continues the same as noted above all the way to Waale except in two places where it is a laterite formation, very dense and hard.

The vegetation is scattered thorn bush, camel thorn, acacia, of two or three varieties, cactus, aloes and a tussocky grass, while in some places, particularly in those where there is the lateritic soil, there are areas of bare earth.

To Afgoi and Mallale.

Turning South from Afgoi the road follows the river, there are a number of native villages on both sides of the river and the land has been cultivated for a distance of two miles back on either bank for many years; there are a few large trees, the Baobab principally, along the river bank. (The bark of a smaller variety of this tree gives a useful fibre), but nothing in the nature of forest, nor are there any signs that the woodland ever extended beyond the seepage area of the river.

I made careful search but found no trace of silt and the people I spoke to assured me that the river never floods, for the remainder of the trip the road ran through exactly the same soil as found at Afgoi and the thorn bush and cactus growth continues right up to the river bank. I turned back just beyond Audegle on the edge of the irrigated area of which Genale is the centre.

The small swamp area on the west side of the river near Mobarash was quite dry and is what is known as a "Desheek" or an area of low land where water gathers during the rains, which quickly dries up again when the rains cease.

I took a soil sample at the end of the day's run - at 5" the formation is shale-like, no doubt the result of flooding many years ago; it is very hard and breaks away in flat cakes. I did not go out to the plantation as I was angling for an invitation to visit them a little later on.

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Isha Baidoa via Afgoi, Audegle and Burakaba.

There is really nothing to say about this line, soils, growth, etc. being exactly the same as along the road to Wanle, just before reaching Burakaba the soil becomes gravelly and the first of the water courses is crossed, it is quite dry and only contains water during the rains.

This also applies to the Bohol Warak, Hida and the Abie Ashu, a water hole at Urugel contained a little water, sufficient for the local stock.

Owing to the dryness of the country most of the cattle are away near the rivers.

Burakaba is the first of the "Burs" or hills of bare rock which are dotted over the plain to the westward. The land rises from the river going west but the rise is so gradual as to be imperceptible, Kassubbi being about 100 metres and Burakaba about 190. In the Burakaba region the vegetation is even poorer than at Audegle and Wanle and consists of little stunted bushes 3' - 4' high.

Isha Baidoa is typical of all the small towns, it is composed of the resident's bungalow and two or three more for the radio staff. A small compound with huts for the soldiers and a native village with a few of the huts occupied by Arab shopkeepers.

There is no possibility of any of this land being brought under cultivation, in some parts along the road there are considerable areas of coarse red sand.

From Mogadishu, Isha Baidoa is 206 kilometers, and 125 miles inland from the coast.

To Bullo Berti via Mahaddei.

This, all the way, is exactly as reported in the line from Afgoi to Audegle, considerable herds of cattle grazing and some native corn fields prepared and waiting for rain to be planted.

There are no European cultivations except that of the Duke of Abruzzi at Joar which I have described elsewhere in this report.

I believe that the soil at Joar is slightly better than elsewhere, at any rate the soil of uncultivated areas in the vicinity appears to be a little more friable although in other respects about the same.

The best land is within five miles of either bank, beyond this line there is a gradual change and the soil becomes lighter in color.

From the appearance of the river it would seem that there is some rain in the mountains, the water carrying a lot of mud.

River average about 60 yards in width.

Merka Irrigated Area (Gemale).

I spent five days in the farm of Count Beria and saw a number of the other farms, also spending a day on the Government Experiment Station. Beria's farm is of 1200 acres. He grows the usual crops, cotton, sim-sim and maize. This farm is more completely equipped than most of the farms in the district, ploughing is done with "Fordson" tractors and cotton is ginned for the surrounding plantations.

In the early part of this year the Director of Agriculture sent a bulletin to all the planters in which he urged them to plant bananas, calling their attention to the importation of foreign grown bananas having been prohibited by Mussolini, and stating that up until the time when this decree came into effect Italy had been importing bananas to the value of Lire 120,000,000 annually.

Practically all the planters in this district have planted a few acres but they quite obviously know nothing at all about the fruit. In



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several places I saw two or three different kinds of banana mixed with plantains growing in the same plot of ground.

It was difficult to estimate the area in bananas, probably it is about 250 acres all told, of which 150 are this year's plantings.

Tomolo, one of the planters, is exporting a few branches to Italy each month, he pays Lire 1.20 per kilo on the plantation and ships them to Mojadiscio by his motor-trucks.

So far I could not find that the planters in the district were very enthusiastic about the new crop, and there does not seem to be anyone to teach them anything about bananas and how to grow them.

At the Government Experiment Station they have a lot of things growing but the farm is not in very capable hands. Little or nothing is being done with cotton or maize, however as a demonstration of what can be grown, not necessarily commercially, it is interesting.

Most of the tropical fruits are grown, also rubber and several kinds of fibre producing plants and trees, nearly all the European vegetables and many ornamental shrubs and trees.

They have just commenced to plant out some bananas, of a native variety, there is also one old cultivation on the farm but it is a pretty hopeless mess of several kinds of banana mixed up with plantains.

On one or two of the cotton plantations I saw Cavendish growing and, as everywhere else, they looked far better than any other variety.

The country is very open and much closer to the sea than the "Sais" plantation at Joar and possibly wind breaks might be required. Trees, Casuarina, Kapok, Eucalyptus, Tamarind, Royal Poinciana, etc. are now being planted along the roadsides and grow well, such plantings could be easily extended.

The irrigated area is all on the east side of the river, the land on the left bank being low and swampy during the rains.

There is a marked difference in the cotton grown close to the river and that grown on the edge of the district towards the sandhills.

Ploughing with a subsoil plough at a good depth with powerful tractors might prove a help, for the soil is very hard at a depth of two to three feet, the soil near the river is the same type of clay loam as that at Joar, the first eighteen inches being fairly friable.

In general the farming here is not nearly as good as that at Joar, few of the farmers growing crops such as dry beans and cow-peas.

There is one principal canal and five secondary canals. These were constructed by the Government. The smaller canals are made by the planters. The principal canal is stated to deliver thirty cubic metres per second. As at Joar the water supply often fails, as it did this year for two and a half months.

There will be nothing done with bananas in this district for some time to come. A railway is essential to handle any quantity of fruit. There are not sufficient motor trucks available to transport more than a few hundred bunches and certainly no person is going to invest in a fleet of trucks to transport fruit once a month. Then again, during rains the roads are impassable. Any developments will come after the provision of a railway, to connect with the present line at Afgoi, and a harbor, until such time the exportation of bananas from this district will be limited to a few hundred stems per month (at present it is a few dozen).

Probably the production of this area will eventually be between one and one and a half million per annum of Cavendish, allowing that a full supply of water is available.

#### Merka to Jelib

This Webi Gofka is dry most of the year and the Webi Shebali near Farugle is narrower than at Afgoi and it becomes gradually smaller until

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at Eleukali it has dwindled away considerably. Much of the swamp land shown on the map is dry most of the year and no doubt the two dams at Gemale and Jear have diverted the water which used to run into these low places.

There are few villages and few cultivations in this part and the country from Brava to the Juba river is a game reserve, the soil is poor a light colored clay loam with some large area of sandy soil - nothing could be done in this district and it will probably always remain a grazing ground.

The natural growth is the usual thorn bush but probably only half as thick and half as high as that seen further north.

This road brought me to the Juba some miles above Jelid where I camped for the night.

I made a number of other trips in the Webi Shibeli district and to the north of Magadishu but the foregoing description of the localities visited tells the whole story, elsewhere it was all exactly the same sand and poor clay loam and thorn bush scrub.

#### JUBA River

After hearing a lot about this river and what a wonderful thing it was from people who knew nothing about it, as I found later, I expected to see some good land but the lands in the vicinity of this river are not as good as on the Shibeli.

#### Jelid to Mismayu

From Jelid I went, on the road which runs close to the river on the east side, via Margherita to Jumbo; the only good patch of land was the farm of the Greek at Beled Elai where there is a good black loam soil.

The soil is a light brown clay loam, not very friable, there is no sign of silt and the vegetation is similar to that in the Shibeli, thorn bush with a few large trees close to the river, the better parts grow fair crops of corn and cotton under irrigation and immediately on the river bank there are a few patches of native bananas and plantations.

There is no tsetse fly and I saw large herds of cattle and flocks of sheep.

The Juba is a somewhat larger river than the Shibeli, it varies little in width except at Jumbo where it is 250 yards wide. Elsewhere the average width is eighty yards.

#### West Side of the Juba

To the south and west the coastal lands consist of sand ridges for fifteen miles inland. Behind this is a great plain broken in a few places by the side shallow water courses, now dry.

The Desmek Wana is a large shallow depression about two miles wide with a gravelly and sandy soil. During the rains it filled up the Lak Dera bringing water down from the Lorian Swamp. There is also another swamp called, I believe, the El Lin, the descent to this is very gradual as is the rise on the other side to the plain. This also was bone dry as was the Lak Hergatta another depression which holds water during the rains and is surrounded by thick thorn jungle.

A lot of long and expensive trestles would be required to bridge these places in the event of a railway being constructed.

All the way the country is the same depressing wilderness of thorn bush. It is practically uninhabited except along the river bank there are only three small villages between Yonte and Kana Hal.

Afmadu is a small military post with a radio station and landing



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field for planes. There is a small native village at this point and a few cattle graze, water is found in deep wells dug in the bed of the Lak Dera.

A long narrow island is formed by the Webi Yero and the Juba and on the west bank is a small patch of woodland about 300 yards in width. This is at the north end of the island and the soil here is a coarse loam, very hard. The middle third of the island has a red laterite soil very poor and the southern part a similar soil to that found on the banks of the main stream; a coarse clay loam.

Upstream from this place the country is open right to the river bank and the soil for a few kilometres is red laterite. Then a stretch of light brown clay loam. The surface of this latter being usually a powdery mulch for the first three or four inches.

Along the river bank there are a number of "Dom" palms growing. The seeds of this palm are the basis of "vegetable ivory", nothing is being done with them, so possibly it is not the correct variety for export.

I saw only traces of silt and then at a depth of  $2\frac{1}{2}$ ' - 3' and no soil which could be classed as banana soil, nor did I see any extent of land with the same type of soil. It is much more variable than along the Webi Shibeli.

The foregoing condenses the observations made during many trips both by car over the trails and in a small boat with outboard-motor.

At least one hundred miles of railway would have to be built, a harbor and dock provided and a big barrage constructed on the river failing which, some 400 kilometres of railway will have to be built to connect up, with the present line. Finally there is no good soil and a scarcity of labor.

Some small amount of fruit may be grown but as a big source of supply for exportation there are no possibilities.

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# DOCUMENT FILE

## NOTE

865B.00/14

SEE 865B.00/74 FOR #1404

FROM Italy ( Kirk ) DATED May 6, 1932  
TO NAME 1-1127 cpo

### REGARDING:

Encloses copy and translation of Italian  
Colonial Budget Report, which contains  
accounts of the political, economic, and  
social conditions prevailing in Somaliland.



Central File: Decimal File 865B.00, Internal Affairs Of States, Somaliland, Political Affairs., September 2, 1930 - May 6, 1932. September 2, 1930 - May 6, 1932. MS European Colonialism in the Early 20th Century. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, [link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5109731265%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC](https://link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5109731265%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC). Accessed 18 June 2025.